

# Ghazar P'arpec'i's

## *History of the Armenians*

Translated from Classical Armenian  
by Robert Bedrosian

*To the memory of my uncle Nishan (Mark) Der Bedrosian*

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***The following Table of Contents was created for the convenience of readers and is not part of the Armenian text.***

[Ghazar's introduction to his work](#)

Ghazar briefly characterizes three works describing Armenia's Christian history: Agat'angeghos' *History* of Armenia's conversion to Christianity; P'awstos Buzand's *History of the Armenians*; and his own, which will describe 5th-century Armenia's religious wars with Iran.

The author is dismayed to detect in P'awstos' narration certain coarse and vulgar passages, which make him suggest that P'awstos' work was altered by some ignorant individual. A digression about the city of Biwandios and how the Byzantine emperor Constantine developed it.

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## Translator's Preface

Ghazar P'arpec'i's *History of the Armenians* was written at the end of the fifth or beginning of the sixth century. The first book of this three-book work begins with information concerning the division of Armenia between the Byzantine and Sasanian empires (in 387), and describes the invention of the Armenian alphabet and the abolition of the monarchy in the Iranian-controlled eastern sector (428) to the death of *kat'oghikos* Sahak (439). Book II describes the anti-Iranian Armenian uprising of 450/451 (the battle of Awarayr) led by Vardan Mamikonean; while Book III describes another anti-Iranian uprising led by Vardan's nephew, Vahan Mamikonean, and known as the 'Vahaneanc' (481-84).

The *History of the Armenians* is the product of an author about whom certain biographical details exist. This information is found in Ghazar's *History* and in his Letter to the *marzpan* of Armenia, Vahan Mamikonean (*marzpan* 485-ca.506). According to these documents, Ghazar was from P'arpi village in the Aragacotn district and perhaps was a Mamikonean relative. He was educated at the home of *bdeshx* Ashusha of Iberia (Georgia) along with Hmayeak Mamikonean's children Vahan, Artashes, and Vard. Subsequently, under the tutelage of Aghan Arcruni, Ghazar became a cleric who received part of his education in Byzantium. According to the Armenist Manuk Abeghyan, from 484 to 486 Ghazar was a hermit in Siwnik', but left his cave when his childhood friend, the now *marzpan* Vahan Mamikonean, invited him to Vagharshapat to become abbot of the monastery there. For reasons not entirely clear, Ghazar eventually was expelled from the monastery by jealous monks. It was then that he wrote his *Letter* to Vahan, refuting the charges levelled against him. At Vahan's request, Ghazar returned to Armenia from his place of refuge, Amida on Byzantine territory. Likewise at Vahan's request, Ghazar wrote his *History of the Armenians*. This work is a panegyric to the Mamikonean family generally, and especially of the rebels Vardan and his nephew Vahan, who was Ghazar's childhood friend and lifelong patron.

[ii] The text of Ghazar's *History* contains one serious lacuna: apparently one or more pages were removed in III.74. which presumably contained a description of the deaths of Vasak Mamikonean and Sahak Bagratuni as well as the names of the *naxarars* (lords) who fell in the same battle. Also, several lines are missing or out of place in the description of Vahan's battle near Mt. Jrvez with the famous Iranian commander Zarmihr Hazarawuxt, which confuses the outcome of the battle. One long section, the "Vision of St. Sahak," in which Sahak speaks of the fall of the Arsacid kingdom and the discontinuation of the priesthood in the line of Gregory the Illuminator, is recognized today as a later interpolation, and is not translated here. The discovery of a lost fragment of P'arpec'i in 1967, which describes the creation of the Armenian alphabet, has cleared away the confusion found in the *History* regarding when this event occurred and also cleared Ghazar of the one serious criticism raised by Abeghyan regarding reliability.

Ghazar P'arpec'i cites three authors as sources: Agat'angeghos, P'awstos Buzand, and Koriwn. He is reluctant to rely on P'awstos' *History* since he discovered in it many passages of an anti-clerical and vulgar nature that led him to suggest that bishop P'awstos' work was corrupted by some uneducated person. Ghazar also appears to have used a *Life of Alexander* and Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*. Likewise the author cites oral informants most notably Arshawir Kamsarakan and his son Nerses, and a Syrian merchant "Xuzhik," all of whom were participants in the events described.

P'arpec'i is a reasonably trustworthy historian. True, certain of his biases, especially his religious worldview occasionally lead him to attribute incorrect causes for some events. Nonetheless, he does know the correct sequence of Iranian and Byzantine kings as well as of Armenian *kat'oghikoi*. His veracity on certain details and events may be confirmed by other sources. In addition to being our major source on military, political, and religious developments in fifth-century Armenia, Ghazar's *History* is also a major untapped source on the [iii] history of fifth-century Iran. For example, the author dates important events to the regnal years of Iranian monarchs, and uses Persian units of measurement for distance throughout his work. He provides interesting information on the judicial and other prerogatives of such Iranian officials as the *hazarapet*, *ambarapet*, *maypet*, master of the wardrobe, *pustipansalar*, and *marzpan*; on the lives and deaths of Yazdgard II, Hormizd III, Valas, and the rebel Zareh. P'arpec'i is a major source on *shah* Peroz, and perhaps the only contemporary historian whose descriptions of this monarch's administrative policies, court life, eastern wars, and "crimes" has survived. Furthermore, the *History of the Armenians* contains detailed information on Iranian religious and administrative policies toward Armenia and Syria, including the treatment of prisoners and the peculiar form of penal servitude called *mshakut'iwn* in Armenian. By no means lastly, P'arpec'i provides a wealth of geographical information on Iran which has yet to be examined by specialists.

Ghazar's attitude toward Iran and its policies is one of unequivocal hatred. This is quite understandable, since as panegyrist of the Mamikoneans who fought with their lives against Iran, he cannot support Iranian policies. Iranian administrative policy included a definite religio-cultural policy. Thus, not only as a Mamikonean sympathizer, but as a Christian cleric, he cannot tolerate either the implications or the actualities of Iranian domination. P'arpec'i's reaction to Iranian religious policies is expressed in several ways: by repudiation of all things Zoroastrian, exultation over Zoroastrian reverses, refutations of Zoroastrian beliefs, elevation of Christian martyrs into epic heroes, and humiliation of the Syrians whose influence in Armenia was encouraged by Iran.

P'arpec'i also has definite opinions about Armenia's nobility, the *naxarars*. He divides this aristocracy into two groups, the oath-keepers and the oath-breakers, *i.e.*, those *naxarars* who fought loyally on the side of the Mamikoneans against Iran and those apostates who sided with Iran and so converted to Zoroastrianism. Those *naxarars* who were traditionally loyal to the Mamikoneans receive great praise from Ghazar who, in his [iv] descriptions of the numerous battles fought, heroically describes their feats of individual bravery. These are the *naxarars* imprisoned in Iran after the Vardananc' whom Ghazar portrays as angels on earth and living martyrs. In jail these pious *naxarars* recalled the moving words of the priest Ghewond; when released from captivity, they secretly kept the relics of the martyred priests; and, while serving in the Iranian army, they conducted open and secret religious meetings. Occasionally the author speaks of "all the *naxarars*," such as the group of nobles who urged *kat'oghikos* Sahak to translate the Bible into Armenian, or the group urging the deposed Sahak to resume his duties as *kat'oghikos*. However, in both instances, Ghazar apparently is referring to Christian rather than Zoroastrian *naxarars*. Likewise the expression "all the *naxarars*," who slay by lapidation the lord Zandaghan for telling Vasak Siwnik' details of the planned revolt, refers to the Christian pro-Mamikonean rather than the Zoroastrian, pro-Iranian *naxarars*. Throughout the fifth century the *naxarars* were strong, independent, and therefore untrustworthy allies. The natural enmity which existed among rival *naxarar* houses also received great impetus from the divisive policies of Iran.

For P'arpec'i, Vardan and Vahan Mamikonean epitomize resistance both to Zoroastrian Iran and to the apostate *naxarars*. There are some general similarities between the descriptions of Vardan and Vahan. However, it is in the personality of Ghazar's friend and patron, Vahan, about whom the information is more detailed and intimate, that one sees most clearly the author's attitude toward the Mamikoneans. Because P'arpec'i considered both the Vardananc' and the Vahaneanc' religious wars, his Mamikonean leaders are holy warriors. They are the protectors of the faith *par excellence*. In war they are noble fighters; in war and peace they care for the poor like good shepherds; uncle and nephew are both portrayed as democratic leaders. The author's pro-Mamikonean bias is apparent also in his defence of that family against charges made by Armenia's enemies—the apostate *naxarars*. Beyond this, Ghazar wishes his reader to understand that the Mamikoneans are the equals of the highest [v] Iranian nobility (if not the monarchy) which deeply admires their prowess. Ghazar's elevation of the Mamikoneans concludes with a hint that the Mamikoneans may in fact be supernatural beings.

The present translation was made from the Classical Armenian edition of G. Ter-Mkrтч'ean and St. Malxasean (*Ghazaray P'arpec'woy patmut'iwn hayoc' ew tught' arh Vahan Mamikonean*, Tiflis, 1904) in 1980. This translation does not include the *Letter to Vahan Mamikonean*. For a more detailed discussion of P'arpec'i see R. Bedrosian, [The Sparapetut'iwn in Armenia in the Fourth and Fifth Centuries](#), *Armenian Review* 36(1983) pp. 6-45, and [Dayeakut'iwn in Ancient Armenia](#), *Armenian Review* 37(1984) pp. 23-47. For studies of the fourth and fifth centuries see C. Toumanoff, *Studies in Christian Caucasian History* (Georgetown, 1963) [especially part II, [States and Dynasties of Caucasia in the Formative Centuries](#), and Part V, [The Armeno-Georgian Marchlands](#)]; his article, "[Armenia and Georgia](#)," [Chapter XIV in *The Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. IV, The Byzantine Empire, part I, (Cambridge, 1966), pp. 593-637]; and N. Adontz, *Armenia in the Period of Justinian* (Lisbon, 1970). The transliteration employed in this translation is a modification of the Hubschmann-Meillet system.

Robert Bedrosian  
New York, 1985

## A Note on Pagination

The printed editions of these online texts show the page number at the top of the page. In the right margin the pagination of the Classical Armenian (*grabar*) text also is provided. We have made the following alterations for the online texts: the page number of the printed English editions (*Sources of the Armenian Tradition* series) appears in square brackets, in the text. For example [101] this text would be located on page 101, and [102] this text would be on page 102. The *grabar* pagination is as follows. This sentence corresponds to the information found on page 91 of the Classical Armenian text [g91] and what follows is on page 92. In other words, the Classical Armenian text delimiters [gnn] indicate **bottom** of page.

## Additional Resources

### Internet Archive:

[Texts and Studies of Ghazar](#)

[Arsacids/Arshakunis](#)

[Sasanians/Sasanids](#)

[The 4th through 6th Centuries](#), from the *Chronicle* of Michael Rabo [Michael the Syrian].

[Syriac Sources](#) (various periods and topics), including historical material.

[Syriac Chronicles and Historiography](#) (various periods and topics), at syri.ac

### Fordham University:

[Byzantine Sources](#) (various periods and topics), prepared by Paul Halsall.

### Wikipedia:

[5th Century](#)

[Battle of Avarayr](#)

[Vahan Mamikonian](#)

[6th Century](#)

### Encyclopaedia Iranica Online:

[Ghazar P'arpec'i](#), by Gohar Muradyan.

[Avarayr](#), by Robert H. Hewsen.

[Trade and Trade Centres in Armenia in the Roman-Parthian and the Byzantine-Sasanid Periods](#), by Hagop Manandian, at Internet Archive.

### Encyclopaedia Iranica:

[Arsacids](#), multiple topics by multiple authors including Cyril Toumanoff, Mary Boyce, and others.

[Sasanian Dynasty](#), by A. Shapur Shahbazi.

[Articles on Armenia](#). Numerous articles by multiple authors.

[Arsacids/Parthians and Sasanian entries](#), from *Selected Topics in Ancient and Medieval Iranian History*, compiled by Robert Bedrosian.

**Maps/Texts**, by Robert H. Hewsen, at Internet Archive:

[The Wars for Religious Freedom](#) (451-484).



[4th-6th Centuries](#). Armenia in the 4th century, the lordly (*naxarar*) system, the organization of the Armenian Church, the first Byzantine expansion into Armenia (387-591), the wars for religious freedom, and the second Byzantine expansion (591-654).

**Chronological Tables**, prepared by Robert Bedrosian, at Internet Archive:

[Armenia and Neighbors](#).

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# Ghazar P'arpec'i's

## *History of the Armenians*

[1] 1. The first book of the history of the Armenians, which was accurately narrated by that venerable man Agat'angeghos, commenced with the death of Artewan caused by Artashir son of Sasan, tyrant of the Stahrac'ik' [and narrated] the conversion of the land of Armenia from the ignorance of idol-worship to the truth of belief in God. [The conversion] was accomplished by the holy martyr Gregory, after whose name the book is called [the book] of Gregory. The second book begins where the first book ends, relating the many changing events, good and bad, occurring in the land of Armenia; the actions and deeds of holy and impure men; and the times of war and peace. All of this, [continuing] to the reign of Tiran, son of Arshak (who was the son of Arshak's son Pap) was recounted by a certain P'ostos Buzandac'i. During his reign the land of Armenia was divided, torn into two shreds like an old cloak. That book which is called the *History of Armenia* ends with that event. [**end** of *grabar* (Classical Armenian) text page 1; henceforth shown as, for example, g1].

[2] The third *History* in order is this one, composed in our infirmity. Compelled by the command of princes and the words of the blessed *vardapets* we committed ourselves to such an important task, not daring to refuse. [For we] recalled the threatening of the disobedient children in the holy Bible, and that the obedient and acquiescent are forgiven. One by one we arranged the events, deeds and diverse occurrences taking place in the land of Armenia [such as] the division [of Armenia between] two kingdoms. In the sector falling to the infidel [Iranians] were brave men from the line of the Armenian *naxarars* (lords) countless numbers of whom gave their lives in martyrdom for the covenant of the holy church, while others withstood shackles and prison for a long time out of divine expectation. [We describe] the beheading of God's chosen priests and upright shepherds who shed their blood for the chosen rational flock of Christ; and those comrades of the *naxarars* and other *azats* who turned their backs on the covenant of holiness becoming tinder for the inextinguishable eternal fire which is awaiting Satan and his satellites.

[3] We wrote about all the events until the start of the *marzpanate* of Armenia of Vahan, lord of the Mamikoneans, the great general and *marzpan* of Armenia. Our history ends there.

2. We have examined many narrations in the books of the first historians of Armenia. After long reading we found in them the periods and centuries of the numerous revolutions happening in the land of Armenia correctly and accurately arranged in the First book. These were appropriately narrated to us by the venerable

Agat'angeghos, a learned experienced man who arranged the events correctly and narrated them in a fitting manner in his aforementioned book. He accurately recounted the waning of the Arsacid Artawan's kingdom, and the growing strength of the Stahrte Artashir son of Sasan; Xosrov's desire for revenge and the anxiety of the boastful Stahrte; the plan and promise [of reward] for whomever could find a means of killing Xosrov; Anak's cunning plan and his murder of Xosrov by deceitful treachery; the subsequent betrayal of the land of Armenia to a foreign kingdom; how *dayeaks* fled to a foreign land with Xosrov's son [Trdat], to save him; the return of Trdat, like a giant, and how he took back the kingdom of his ancestors, bravely waging a successful battle; how saint Gregory came to him filled with the desire for voluntary service; the tribulations of that saint—how [4] he was taken to the desert and [g2] [subjected] to innumerable torments, how Christ's aid was shown the saint, to the amazement of the yet unconverted people; the extent [of Gregory's] patience [a man who spent] so many years in the pit, and the prescient concern from on High, which kept this hero for work in Armenia; the arrival of the blessed virgins from the city of the Romans; the shedding of martyrs' blood in the city of Vagharsapat; the appearance of boils on people's bodies; saint Gregory's emergence from the deep pit and the removal from the land of Armenia of the darkness of ignorance [and Armenia's turn] to the heavenly kingdom of light and, thereafter, the exhortation of the doctrine of Life in the land of Armenia; the testament of baptism in light, which Christ the Savior caused to spread in our land, through the intercession of the great hero Gregory and the blessed virgins; the building of churches; the radiance of the priests, the large crowds of people attending the feasts of the Savior and assemblies in honor of the saints. All of this and more was related to us in a clear and correct narration by that venerable man of God, the blessed Agat'angeghos.

3. Now after this [comes a book which describes] the events, times and occurrences in the land of Armenia [5] over the turbulent centuries, [periods] of occasional peace and times of intense and endless confusion, of cleaving together in unity and of tearing apart in disunity; when some were true to the divine command and stood in obedience to their natural Arsacid kings, while others wanted to serve foreign kings, to the ruination of themselves and their land. Those who were united saw God's aid visited upon themselves and their land. But those who divided and broke away caused harm and ruin for themselves and the land.

A certain historian called P'awstos Buzandac'i is said [to be the author] of this second book. However, because some people have considered certain words employed by him in some passages, to be not proper and fitting, lacking the veracity of [the book] called Agat'angeghos, they have expressed doubts that someone having been educated among the Byzantines would say such improper things. (Biwzandios was a very small city having been built first by a certain man named Biwzas, close to the Thracian borders. Now when by God's command the blessed Constantine went to make war on the countless hosts of the Goths, he encamped his troops by the banks of the Ghekovb River. Because he was worthy of [g3] divine providence he was clearly shown the luminous symbol of the life-giving Cross in the starry sky. Around it, in rays, was the motto "By this shall you conquer." [Constantine] arose, and, hoping to expell the enemies' armies by means [6] of the aid of the blessed symbol which had appeared to him, he urgently sought for [the Cross], hurriedly sending his mother, the vererable Helen, to Jerusalem. Everyone knows, informed by his book, how there [in Jerusalem] because of a fervent search by a holy man the Cross of Life, our salvation, was discovered.

The emperor [t'agaworn] himself came to the aforementioned small city named Biwzandios. He noted the marvellous security of the place. Despite the fact that much difficult labor would be required [to improve] the place, [Constantine] was in no way discouraged, because of the island's advantages. For the place was surrounded on all sides by water except for one small dry road on the western side of the city. He set to work at once and ordered that all the high hills on the island be levelled and he built a glorious city named Constantinople, after himself. In Armenian Constantinople translates "Constantine's city", though some call it Paghat in Latin, which translates "royal". Now the Biwzandios which had been built earlier became a district on the edge of the city which to the present is still called Byzantium. [7] From that time on streams of wisdom have issued from that city, as from a royal residence, and prominent scholars have hastened to go

there from all parts of the Byzantine land. To this day those streams of knowledge have extended themselves and have flowed to all areas).

Now, could the man P'awstos who had studied in such a city amidst such a multitude of scholars have put such unpleasant-sounding things in his history? May it not be so! To my feeble mind also the work is untrustworthy. Perhaps some other bold uneducated person shamelessly put his hand to it and wrote what he pleased. Or, perhaps some incapable person, unable to do it properly, altered [the work] in another way and thought to conceal the errors of his impudence under the name of P'awstos. [That something is amiss] is clear to all who look at it. Indeed, there are those among the Byzantines, but many more among the Syrians—bold and ignorant people—who have done such tamperings—[g4] written futile and useless narrations of their own and inserted them into literate books. However, critical folk clearly are able to differentiate between the words of scholars and the chatterings of fools.

4. Many people requested [that I write this book]. [Among them were] the learned and brave general and *marzpan* [8] of Armenia, Vahan, lord of the Mamikoneans who, with his alert mind was aware of all of this [i.e., of the faults in P'awstos' work]. [Vahan] during the time of his authority introduced many, innumerable reforms in the land of Armenia. In this case, as in everything else, he was concerned about events in the land of Armenia and so regarded it as most fitting and appropriate that the affairs transpiring in Armenia be recorded, beginning where the Second book of history left off. [He wanted] all the virtues of the clerics and the good deeds of brave men to be written down and arranged in order with great care. This was to be done so that when the multitude of the people heard about the goodness of the clerics they would strive to emulate such men in their exertions; while brave men, hearing about the deeds of earlier braves would redouble their valor and leave a renowned reputation of themselves and their people. Conversely, the lazy and bad people [because of these examples] would examine themselves, and, hearing the reproach of others, would strive to improve through goodly emulation.

By just such an example were we forced [to write this history] by the lord of the Mamikoneans, Vahan, the general of Armenia and the *marzpan*. The order came from him to me, Ghazar P'arpec'i. [I] was nourished and educated by the [9] virtuous cleric, the venerable Aghan, descended from the line of the marvellous and renowned Arcruni *tohm*, son of Vasak brother of Tachat and Gotorz. [Aghan], while still a child, when the fresh down of a beard appeared on his handsome rosy cheeks, rejected all the pleasures of this transitory life and, choosing to follow eternal goodness on the road to Heaven, went and lived in a retreat with some select men, practising great asceticism. No one can sufficiently recount the heroic man's numberless deeds. Let the matter rest with this much, that finding fault with the body, [Aghan] brought himself to the behavior of the incorporeal heavenly hosts by means of sleepless vigils, fasting, and ceaseless praying from morning to evening always with untiring spiritual exertions. Never in his life did he select one particular time for praying, rather he prayed without rest morning and evening. Thus did he live until more white hairs than fair hairs covered his head and, completing the course of his great achievement, he reposed. He was buried in the chapel at Hadamakert. The name of this blessed man is recalled [g5] among the names of the holy witnesses preached to this day and forever in all the churches of the lands of Armenia, Iberia/Georgia, and Aghbania/Aghuania.

[10] We, in our weakness, were forced to undertake this work (which is above our abilities) by the lord of the Mamikoneans. Vahan, the *sparapet* of Armenia, and *marzpan*. For... [There is a lacuna at the end of this sentence. The beginning of the following passage also has a lacuna. We have not translated this half sentence: *ew parteal er'andeann charut'iwnn andrer ew and dadareal c'acnun*. The editors suggest (p. 6 n. 6) that the missing passage speaks of the perils faced by merchants at sea, and that P'arpec'i is following a similar metaphor employed in Agat'angeghos' forward]

...Thus does the word of mighty God accomplish everything that He wills. Becoming enraged at our evil deeds, He urges us to repent. Seeing us turned good, He quickly has mercy upon us.

5. Now greedy lovers of material goods who have escaped from such a perilous death upon reaching their destination recall their hopes, forget their sorrow, and are delighted with their profits. How much more treasure will be found [11] by those inheritors of Eternity who have accurately and truthfully recorded history and have not added words to please anyone when, as the Psalmist says, "the bones are dispersed" [i.e., at the Judgement]. Rather, [such historians] with watchful piety have navigated precisely over many profoundly learned words, taking refuge in hope of grace of the Holy Spirit. As a foundation they had orthodox faith, rather than wooden planks. Instead of possessing the appropriate apparatus [on a ship], they had the indivisible unity of the Holy Trinity. Since the planks of ships, without great labor do not make a seaworthy vessel, how much more is that the case in the undertaking of such a great spiritual work where the assistance of virtuous men is very important. For there is no small doubt involved for an individual to fearlessly give himself over to such labors [as writing a history] wherein the words must be appropriate and the arrangements determined according to an established scholarship and the accuracy able to stand reading to learned listeners without arousing their ridicule. One must not add things which did not happen, with a vain inflation of words. Nor should [the historian] reduce [the importance of] [12] events and carelessly relate things in an abbreviated manner. Rather everything should be revealed with sober caution [g6]. Because there is need here of much pious preparation, as a favor to my weak mind I beseech you, help me all you prayer-loving people to request aid, raising your hands to God. This obligatory labor—to record accurately and truthfully—is beyond my abilities. But by God's aid may I navigate through the great and deep rapids with learned accuracy and, with the intercession of the saints, may I reach the safe and untroubled harbor.

Blessed be God [g7].

## Part One

6. After the division of the [Armenian] Arsacid kingdom into two parts—the western part of the land of Armenia was subject to the emperor of Byzantium and under his authority, while the eastern part had been humbled by the bitter and tyrannical service tendered to the king of Iran—the Armenian *naxarars* who were in the Iranian king's sector, went and requested [that they be given] their own king, selected, according to [13] the rule of their native ancestors, from the Arsacid line. Shahpuhr [III, 383-88] king of Iran, fulfilled their requests and bestowed upon them as king [a member] of the Arsacid line named Xosrov.

The previous king of Armenia, Arshak, had ruled absolutely over the entire land of Armenia. When he saw that the great authority of his line's kingdom had been shaken, demolished, and pulled apart, in great sadness he had uneasy doubts with himself. First he observed that the land of Armenia had fallen under the burden of serving two kings. Then he noted that the greater part of Armenia's best, most useful and fertile lands was in the Iranian king's sector. Despite the fact that the emperor of Byzantium had inherited many other districts, [those lands, taken together,] could be compared only to the [Iranian-held] district of Ayrarat. After much stormy consultations with his loved ones, the distraught king Arshak said to himself: "To the present there has been neither conflict nor affection between us but now they threaten us with war and a man must recognize the experience of someone [14] better than himself. But should we bow and incline toward affection for each other, then they will regard us as brothers, giving less honor and less seniority; not all [the lands] will be our share, and we shall bear the name of servitude. Indeed now, because we and our ancestors have enraged tolerant and mild God, we have been betrayed into slavery, and are bowed in dishonor, and are inconsolable [g8] at the division. We watched the haughty godless Iranian people inherit the beautiful site of our rest and

habitation. Consequently, I prefer to quit the desirable and coveted places of the Ayrarat country, to leave the native and *sephakan* place of my ancestors, and go into poverty and live with strong longings, rather than appreciate the way of life in a land where it is as if I am unwillingly tolerated. I prefer to live in the other sector than to dwell among infidels in disgrace and always with mental anguish through the unknown turns of my life—be it long or short—and to die in dishonor, which does not befit the royal dignity and majesty." [15]

7. Thinking over all of this inwardly, king Arshak forsook and abandoned the good, native inheritance of his ancestors, the district of Ayrarat. [Ayrarat] was charming, renowned and illustrious, containing all plants and flowers, full of the advantageous, having victuals needed to sustain human life, full of beauty and refreshment. [Ayrarat contained] extensive plains full of game, beautiful sites and fertile fields surrounded by mountains. The fields were densely covered with game, those with snouts, those chewing their cud, and many others with them. From the peaks of the mountains water courses down and nourishes the plains which need no irrigation, bringing an immeasurable abundance of bread and wine, sweet-smelling, delicately flavored vegetables, and a variety of oil—producing plants to women, men and families at the *ostan*. Now the fertile earth-smelling fields which adorned the mountain flanks and level ground struck the refreshed gaze of the viewer more like clothing than the color of vegetation. The lush growth of grasses over the countless pasturages fed the tame asses and the forbidding herds of wild deer [making them] moist and plump and covered with fat, their bodies over. [The plains contained] fragrant plants which are [16] sought after by brave [warriors] and by those who shepherd flocks [for use as an ointment] against wounds, lending health [such plants] heighten the senses and renew them. Many different types of plant roots are found there, useful to the learned doctors who recognize them, for making medicines. Such fast-acting illness-destroying ointments [applied] or [g9] [potions] which are drunk bring health to those long-suffering in illnesses.

The abundance of the plains, which wins to itself the will of those who enjoy labor, and gives as if for a word, what is good, invites one to turn again to it. Everything of profit to humankind is not just what is displayed. No, those who would search even farther will find much of value buried in the ground. [Such miners] can accumulate profits and enjoy the good things of this world in the [style of the] greatness of kings, confident [of satisfying] the tax-collectors. [Miners] found gold, copper, iron, and precious stones. When [such stones] came into the craftsmen's hands, they became the magnificent ornaments which adorn monarchs set into the diadem and crown, and women with gold thread into [royal] clothing. With [17] the mixing with waters, a twin sweetness offers itself to eaters of different kinds of fine dishes. The roots of reed-like plants do not merely dine uselessly from the [nourishment] of the coveted Ayrarat plain, but worms which are nourished by the plants offer profits and luxury [since] decorative red colors are made [from the worms]. The rivers are full of diverse large and small fish with different appearances and flavors. [The fish] cause delight, supplying profit, and filling the stomachs of those [ascetics] who tirelessly are striving.

Fed by the beautiful waters of the country, the land also brings forth an abundance of fowl—to the delight and recreation of the prey-hungry *azats*. The throaty warble of flocks of partridge and heath-cocks which love concealing themselves in rock crevices. The meaty, delicious species of wild cocks which dwell in the reeds and brush. The large-limbed full-bodied birds which dive beneath the water [18] searching for moss, and eating snakes [*ayl ew zjrasuzak mamrhaxndir \*xozaker* [? *ojaker*] *mecanjunk' ew yaght'amarmink' hawk'n*]. The *p'or*, the bustard, the goose [*p'orn ew t'anjrn ew sagn*] and many other countless types, many flocks of land and sea birds. Once [an area had been] surrounded by traps and hunters' nets, brigades of *naxarars* with the sons of the *azats* would come forth to hunt. There, some would chase after onagers and wild goats filling the air with the sound of the bold whizzings of their arrows. Some would race on their horses after herds of deer and hinds displaying the exploits of powerful men. Others with swords drawn as though for single-combat would go after packs of huge wild boars and, causing them to tumble, would kill them. Many of the *naxarars'* small sons, with their tutors and servants, hunted diverse types of birds, using [g10] falcons, and thus added to the delight of the meal. Thus did each person, heavy with his game, depart rejoicing.

[19] There one could see the children of fishermen who fished the waters, according to their daily custom, coming before the people of the *naxararagund* bearing fish they had caught, as well as the chicks of diverse wild birds, and eggs from river islands. These things [the children] presented to the princes as offerings. The *naxarars*, as they pleased, selected a part of what was offered, then bestowed the remainder on the bearers, more than enough for them. When each man reached his mansion, loaded with all sorts of good things, he bestowed the clean[ed game] on those who had stayed home not participating, and especially on foreigners. There one could see everyone dining, surrounded by piles of deer heaped upon each other, and their heads, purposely arranged. Though both eaters of fish and eaters of meat were delighted by the fineness of the delicacies, [they also took delight in] spiritual matters, using psalms and songs of the prophets to bless Christ, the bestower, giver, implementor of all good things.

[20] 8. Because of their unworthy deeds, the Arsacid line was found unworthy of the district of Ayarat, such a coveted extraordinary district, full of everything that the all-caring creator God could provide. [The Arsacids were unworthy of] this illustrious, rich district which is the chief [district] in the land of Armenia, which in its abundance resembles the Biblical country of Egypt and God's Paradise. [The Arsacids were unworthy of] the native *sephakan* property of the Arsacid line, the city of Vagharshapat, the *ostan* dwelling of the Arsacid kings, the countless loftily built mansions, the delight of those most lush plains, the foundation of the blessed House of God—the great church cathedral—the dimensions of which were pointed out by an angel, and the martyria of the venerable ascetic virgins. [The Arsacids were found unworthy] in accordance with the words of that holy man of God, Nerses, that they would be among those shunned by God. They were betrayed by the division of the great land of Armenia between the two kings of Byzantium and Iran who caused them to do service.

Thus did Arshak, king of Armenia, quit the district of Ayarat as if going into captivity. He considered it better to go to the much smaller sector [of Armenia] in a believing country, where he would be subject to the Byzantine emperor, [21] than to remain in such a luxuriantly comfortable district [as Ayarat] and witness daily the ridicule of the [Christian] religion, enmity directed against the holy Church, the insults born by clerics of the divine covenant from the impious mages [g11], and the scorn shown to his line and kingdom from the arrogant princes of the Iranian lordship. So he preferred to live out this inconsequential and measured life in peace as a Christian rather than remain dwelling there in false glory, as one who is scorned, and, not attaining eternal life, be betrayed to the inextinguishably burning eternal fire. Thinking all of this over, suddenly he made up his hesitant mind to leave the good inheritance of his ancestors, and to enter the service of the Byzantine emperor.

9. After some time had passed, those Armenian *naxarars* who were under Iranian lordship displayed their hatred toward their king Xosrov. [This was done] in order to further weaken the rule of the Arsacid line. Because of their increasingly wicked deeds (which the blessed patriarchs of the past had mentioned, as did numerous other virtuous men, badly complaining about and reproaching their unworthy actions and the betrayal to the burden of severe and impious service of the Iranians), [the *naxarars*] went to the Iranian king, Shapuh, complaining that "Xosrov gives you to think that he likes and is loyal to you, but all his displays are false and fraudulent. For he has [22] a secret oath and counsel with the Byzantine emperor, and is always discussing peace with him by means of *hrovartaks* and messengers. Would you, if you knew the extent of his deception, dare to requite him accordingly [*Bayc' duk' orpes imanayk' hatuc'anel nma est nora xabeut'eann zayn duk' och' ishkek'*]?" In their stupidity, these slanderers hoped to destroy [Xosrov] and to be the cause of personal gain as well as cultivation of the land. But they did not know that because of their sins God had condemned them to suffer yet longer and had betrayed them to an evil servitude.

The Iranian king Shapuh heard this [complaint] with great delight and eagerness. He ordered that Xosrov be quickly summoned to court by a *hrovartak*. Knowing nothing about the accusation of the Armenian princes, [Xosrov] hurriedly went to court, as if going to his prince and friend. Shapuh inimically threatened him.

Perhaps it was because there was such enthusiasm for deposing [Xosrov] that [Shapuh] did not want to confront him with his accusers. Rather, [Shapuh] quickly stripped Xosrov of the authority of his realm, vowed that he would never again see the land of Armenia, and kept him there in Iran. Now as soon [g12] as Xosrov was denied the kingdom, the Armenians requested another [23] king of their own from Shapuh. Agreeing, [Shapuh] enthroned Vramshapuh, Xosrov's brother, of the Arsacid line, and dispatched him to Armenia.

10. During the period of his reign the most provident God favored [Armenia] with a truthful man named Mashtoc.' He was from the district of Taron, from the village of Hac'ekac', son of a man named Vardan. In his childhood he had studied Greek. He enlisted/served as a soldier at the court of the Armenian king Xosrov and was established among the group of scribes, as a royal scribe. For in that period the royal scribes treated the affairs of Armenia's kings in Syriac or Greek, as well as decisions and *hrovartaks*. For years he served there properly and without reproach, but then he began to long for the monastic life. He went to a monastery of many brothers, assumed the monastic life and became the most select and venerable of all. He rejected all temporal worldly pursuits. Then he moved to the deserts and became wondrous and renowned. He dwelled in numerous caves in the desert, with great virtue, practising strict asceticism together with many other prayer-loving brothers and clerics of blessed behavior until the fifth [24] year of king Vramshapuh, brother of Xosrov. Should someone wish to confirm this, he may read the history of that desirable man Koriwn, a student of the venerable Mashtoc' which provides information about [Mashtoc's] life, his Armenian letters, about when, where and by whom [the Armenian letters] were found, and about the enthusiastic entreaties of Armenia's king Vramshapuh. Koriwn, the aforementioned spiritual man, wrote all of this down accurately. We have read [Koriwn] numerous times, and so confirmed our information.

Thus did humane and caring God accept the plan of that venerable man Mashtoc' which the latter had been thinking about for a long time. God strengthened him with the spirit of His mercy. The venerable Mashtoc' had always been concerned and saddened, seeing the great effort and even more the expenses [involved in educating] the clerics of the land of Armenia. With many stipends, [obliged] to travel distant roads, and with long study [did these students] pass their days in Syrian schools. For the services in the church and readings from [25] Scripture were conducted in Syriac in the monasteries and churches of the Armenian people. As a result, the populace of such a large land was unable to comprehend or benefit [from the services]. The unusualness of the Syrian language gave labor to the officiants while bringing no profit to the people. For a long while the venerable Mashtoc' had been [g13] considering this situation. He was grieved that there existed no letters for the Armenian language by which it would be possible to win the souls of men and women in all the churches by utilizing the language itself and not a foreign language. Strengthened by the encouragement of the holy spirit, [Mashtoc'] went to the blessed *kat'oghhikos* of Armenia, Sahak, and informed him of the problem about which he had been thinking for such a long while. [Mashtoc'] received encouraging good news from him. "Remain strong," [Sahak said] "and take along priests whom I shall order to assist you. Wherever you falter in establishing the syllables, bring the work to me and I shall correct it, for what you propose to do would make things much easier. But first it would be worthwhile for us to make the king feel the need for such a great and important thing. Because not many days ago in church someone raised the issue of the need [26] for such a thing, and told the king that he had seen Armenian letters in the possession of a certain bishop in one village. The king recalled what had been said, since he also told me about it."

The blessed *kat'oghhikos* of Armenia, Sahak, and the venerable Mashtoc' went into king Vramshapuh's presence and informed him of the issue. The king himself recalled what the monk had said to him regarding this matter and delighted [them] by relating it. When they heard this from the king they urged him to make haste, saying: "Exert yourself regarding finding such a great and useful device for the land of Armenia during your own reign, for it will benefit you later on, bestowing upon you an unforgettable remembrance, and you will have brought more benefits of worldly convenience [by this means] than the might of your realm or that of your predecessors, your ancestors of the Arsacid line, did." The king heard this and, rejoicing, glorified God that it was during his reign that the desire of such a spiritual life was inherited by the land of Armenia.

[The king] immediately dispatched an ambassador called Vahrich (by his parents) giving him a *hrovartak*, and sending him to a certain presbyter named Habel who earlier had spoken to the king and who was related to the pious bishop Daniel who had the Armenian letters. The venerable Habel accepted the [27] *hrovartak* from Vahrich, listened to what he had to say, and then quickly hastened to the wondrous bishop Daniel. [Habel] learned the system of the letters from Daniel himself, and took [a copy of the letters] from him to the king, to the blessed patriarch [g14] of Armenia, Sahak, and to the venerable Mashtoc'. They received the letters from Habel, and were happy.

So it was that after fortuitously receiving the discovered letters, the venerable Mashtoc' set to work adapting [the alphabet] to [the recommendations of] the blessed patriarch of Armenia, Sahak, putting the letters in an easily accessible order and correct syllabic pronunciation. [Sahak] gave him assistants and other learned and scholarly men from among the Armenian priests who, as the venerable Mashtoc', were only slightly familiar with Greek syllabification. Among them were, first, Yohan from Ekegheac' district; second, Yovsep' from Paghanakan Tun [*Yovsep' i Paghanakan tanen*]; third, Ter from Xorjean, and fourth, Mushe from Taron who aided and [28] strengthened the venerable Mashtoc', who put the Armenian [g15] alphabet in the same order as the Greek, frequently asking and learning from the blessed *kat'oghikos* Sahak information about the alphabet, based on the infallible Greek alphabet. For [this group] was not able to unerringly deal with modifications without the guidance of the blessed patriarch Sahak. Sahak was quite competent, having studied with many learned Byzantines. He was fully versed in musical notation, exhortatory rhetoric, and especially philosophy.

Once they had arranged the letters of the Armenian alphabet, adapted from the Greek copy—guided by the Savior—they wanted to establish schools and teach the multitude of clerics. For everyone enthusiastically wanted to study Armenian and were delighted that they had been freed from the torments of Syriac as if escaping from darkness to light. But they hesitated when it came to [translating] the holy Bible. For as yet there was no Armenian translation of the holy testaments for the Church. The venerable Mashtoc' and the honorable priests who were with him lacked the strength to attempt such an intense and important labor, as translating the books [of the Bible] from Greek into [29] Armenian, because they were not so very adept at Greek.

11. Then all the senior priests of the land of Armenia, with the venerable Mashtoc', all the *naxarars* of Armenia and the grandee *tanuters* assembled by the king of Armenia, Vramshapuh and, together with the king, they began to beseech the blessed *kat'oghikos* Sahak to apply himself to this spiritual work and to translate the Biblical testaments from Greek into Armenian. The orders of the senior priests said to the blessed patriarch:

"We who stand before you, and the venerable Mashtoc' [urge you to undertake the translation]. Divine grace awoke [in Mashtoc'] the desire to put into order the list of letters long-since devised, which no one had bothered about putting into use. Rather [the literate class] labored with the difficult, useless and arrogant Syriac language. As a result, the multitude of the people [seeing matters as] futile and vain ceased going to church, while the instructors, straining and sighing, regretted their empty exertions. Consequently no learned individual perceived any benefit from the doctrine of spiritual counsel which is food and nourishment for those seeking knowledge. [30] When [Mashtoc'] found the letters, Christ aided him and made him even stronger. Let the [final] arrangement of all this effort be accomplished with your virtuous knowledge. Now, just as the blessed champion of [g16] Christ, Gregory, by the aid of mighty [God], was kept unharmed throughout the torments, and was given [by God] to accomplish the illumination of [Christian] knowledge in the land of Armenia, so for you too, his descendant, an inheritance-share of this glowing religion has been kept. Begin this cultural work and be like your blessed ancestor who guided the land of Armenia from ignorance to the truth of recognition of God. Lead the many people



of this big land from that useless borrowed language to correct, spiritually-uplifting rationality which will adorn the church. Fill this void which has existed from [the time of] your blessed ancestors. God kept you for this and it is a great task which no other person in the land of Armenia is capable of doing. For we were unable to become as informed of and learned in the study [of Greek], as you who were given brilliance from On High because of your virtuous and modest spirit. In this regard, truly, you take after your venerable father, Nerses."

When Sahak, the pious *kat'oghikos* of Armenia, heard all of this from Vramshapuh, king of Armenia, from the venerable Mashtoc', from the entire covenant of the priesthood, and [31] especially from the senior *tanuters* and all the *naxarars* of Armenia, his soul rejoiced and he glorified the Savior of all, lord Jesus Christ. With willing enthusiasm he gave himself up to the work, proud of the assistance of God Who had graced him with such superb knowledge. Tirelessly working day and night, [Sahak] translated all the testaments, spoken by the true prophets of the Holy Spirit, confirmed and sealed by the luminous, envivifying sermons of the new testaments [pronounced] by the blessed Apostles, [filled] with the same Spirit.

Now when the blessed patriarch of Armenia, Sahak, had completed this work of great spiritual effort, immediately afterwards schools were established for teaching the flock. The ranks of writers swelled, and, vying with each other, they embellished the worship of the holy Church. They encouraged multitudes of men and women to attend the Savior's feast days and to visit the shrines of the martyrs. These people, full of spiritual gain, after communing in the great mystery, went in joy, each to his home, grandees and children saying psalms and anthems (*kc'ords*) everywhere, in the squares, in the streets, and at home. The churches grew radiant and the martyria of the [32] saints became majestic with offerings of the testaments which were always blossoming within them. Ceaseless streams of exegesis flowed from the speakers who, in explaining the secrets of the prophets, placed the most lavish tables of spiritual [g17] delicacies before the entire people. Those seekers of wisdom who supped of this found [the meal] to their liking and, as the psalm states, the words of doctrine were sweeter than a honeycomb. Let me say, in the words of the blessed prophet Isaiah, that the entire country of Armenia filled with the knowledge of the Lord as waters cover the ocean, thanks to the spiritual rivers of the blessed patriarch Sahak. And thanks to the all-caring Savior Christ, all of this was accomplished during the time of Vramshapuh, as was written earlier. After this, king Vramshapuh lived for many years. Having reached old age, he died peacefully in his bed in the land of Armenia.

12. Subsequently, the Iranian king Shapuh died [A.D. 388] and was succeeded by his son Vram [Vahram IV, A.D. 388-399] who was the Krman shah [*or er Krman ark'ay*] It was from this ruler that the Armenians [33] again requested that Vramshapuh's brother, Xosrov, be made their king. This was the same Xosrov whom the Armenians previously had had the Iranian king Shahpuh remove from the kingdom of Armenia, through their accusations. [Vahram IV] fulfilled their request and once more enthroned Xosrov who was an extremely old man. Xosrov came to the land of Armenia but was gathered to his fathers after only eight months.

After the death of Vahram, king of Iran, his brother Shapuh's son Yazkert [I, A.D. 399-421], ruled over the land of Iran. Not wanting to enthrone anyone from the Arsacid line over Armenia, Yazkert instead enthroned his own son who was named Shapuh (after [Yazkert's] father). The man had some evil thoughts in his head. First, [he reasoned] that the land of Armenia was large and useful, a border and gateway to the Byzantine realm. Many [members] of the Arsacid line had submitted [to Byzantine rule]. It was possible that, like brothers, the peoples under our sway and under Byzantine authority might grow fond of each other, and with this mutual affection unite, talk peace with the Byzantine emperor, gladly submit to him, and rebel from us. Just as [the Byzantines] have made work for us many times [in the past], with the addition [of the Armenians] it will be even worse, and they will trouble us with [34] warfare. Secondly, [the Armenians] are strangers to our religion, and hate it, while they share faith and religion [with the Byzantines]. Now, should someone of our line rule over the land of Armenia, our kingdom will not be troubled by such doubts, and [the Armenians] will serve us with constant fear and trepidation, nor will they attempt anything strange or [g18] think about

anything harmful. And when this becomes the custom, they will conceive a liking for our faith, since [Armenians and Iranians] will constantly be talking with each other and will become intimate friends [by participating] in the hunts and games which take place among them. Furthermore through intermarriage they will communicate with each other while those [Armenians] thus separated [from Christianity] will grow to love [their spouses] as well as their [Zoroastrian] customs.

Although [Yazkert] had such thoughts, he did not know about the words of the Holy Spirit which say: "The Lord knows the vanity of human plans." Quickly these words became a verdict which was actually carried out, for Yazkert did not rule for long, and died. The very same day, in a plot hatched by people from court, [Yazkert's] son Shapuh whom [Yazkert] had [35] made king over the land [of Armenia] instead of an Arsacid was killed at court there. After the death of Yazkert (son of Shapuh [III]), king of Iran, [Yazkert's] son Vahram [Vrham, Vahram V Gur, 421-38/39] ruled over the land of the Aryans. Princes from the land of Armenia came before Vahram, king of Iran, and requested that they be given a king from the Arsacid line. [Vahram] enthroned Artashes (Vrhamshapuh's son) from the line of the kings of Armenia.

13. Artashes was a cad, a luster after women, and reigned with much debauchery. Now because the *naxarars* of Armenia were unable to stand the dissolute and deviant conduct of king Artashes, they assembled in numbers by the great patriarch of Armenia st. Sahak, son of st. Nerses, from the Part'ew line. They said: "We can no longer bear the impure and foul actions of the king. We consider it better to die than to constantly see and hear about such filthy things. Moreover, because of conscience, we are unable to commune in the great, honored, and divine mystery after seeing such obscenity every day yet remaining silent about it. For we learned from you and from the doctrine of your ancestors that not only those who commit such [36] things are guilty, but even those who countenance them. Now, first you ought to seek some way out of this unbelievable calamity and do away with such a lewd monarch who so openly—like an unbeliever—scornfully tramples what is holy, and fearlessly works this filthy pollution."

When the blessed patriarch of Armenia, Sahak, heard these words from the Armenian *naxarars*, he replied as follows: "I know what you are talking about, and have heard nothing new from you today. I also know that it is with bitter hearts that you speak. I am unable to say whether what you say has been distorted or incorrectly related by you. But now as regards strategems, worthy spiritual folk should find some solution to this, and everyone should think about it and implement it" [g19].

[The *naxarars*] one and all replied to the blessed *kat'oghikos* Sahak, saying: "We are unable to find any solution to this, except to complain to the king of Iran to remove him from the throne. [Artashes] himself by his actions proved that he was unworthy of the inheritance. We can think of doing nothing other than this. Now we beg you to support our plan. It is not fitting to be an accomplice to such blasphemous and obscene acts as the king commits."

When the blessed spiritual *kat'oghikos* of Armenia, Sahak, [37] heard all of this from the Armenian *naxarars* and when he realized accurately that all the nobles of the land had the same sentiments and were set in this plan, he sank into great sadness and unconsolable mourning. Shedding rivers of tears in front of the multitude of Armenian *naxarars*, [Sahak] refused to reply for many days. He shut himself in his room and only the sound of lamentation and weeping could be heard [by those who] approached the chamber door. The man of God [wept] because by the power of the holy Spirit he saw the [coming] total destruction of the land of Armenia. Now many days later some bishops who were always in attendance at the saint's door (and were unable, even for a short time to stand going without the abundantly flowing and grace-filled doctrine of the man [a doctrine] which, to those spiritual and wise listeners who dined on the mysteries, had a sweet taste, as the prophet Daniel said, sweeter than a honeycomb) and some of the honorable presbyters and deacons (who were from the holy covenant of the patriarch), and others of Armenia's *azat* nobility dared to enter [Sahak's] room and spoke with him beseechingly. At this [38] the blessed patriarch was consoled somewhat and,

through the spiritual wisdom and counsel which were a part of him from his childhood, he ceased crying for a while and was silent.

Now after many days the entire united *azatagund* of the land of Armenia assembled and repeated the same sentiments before the blessed *kat'oghikos* of Armenia, urgently beseeching him to join with them. When the saint observed that in no way had they retreated from their former intentions and plans—because the daily increasing impure actions of the king, leading to his ruin, caused the unity of the princes to grow even stronger—with great lamentation [Sahak] raised his voice and said to them one and all:

"I, and you too, as we learned from God, should speak in a spiritual manner. Bearing for a moment the man's shortcomings, beseech the most merciful Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ, with tears and entreaties for some way out. For [g20] [Artashes], because he was baptised is our brother and of our flesh, even though he is a sinner. Remember the doctrine of the blessed Apostle Paul, which your spiritual father and patriarch, the blessed Gregory, taught you: 'If one limb [of the body] causes pain, then all the other limbs ache along with it. And if one limb is healed, then all the other limbs rejoice with it.' It is worth recalling and reflecting on the grief, discomfort, imprisonment and shackles of saint Gregory; [and about] his [39] entreaties and prayers to God for the salvation of the entire land; and how thanks to the Holy Spirit, he turned everyone from unbelief to belief; how he persecuted the demons of deviance and made them flee from you; and how he caused the seed of true faith, of recognition of God, to flower among you. Following his example, you ought to seek mercy for that blameworthy limb and not betray him to the infidels, and make the blessed mystery of our religion an object of ridicule and contempt. Remember my and your blessed father and *vardapet* [st. Gregory] who with sighs and ceaseless entreaties, morning and night, moved Christ (the creator of all) to pity and to transform back to a human shape [king Trdat] who had been changed into a beast. You who are students of his spiritual doctrine—all of you together, men, women, old, and young—with entreaties and tears make peace with all-powerful God for Whose awesome commands of might nothing is impossible. He accomplishes in a humane fashion what appear to us to be extremely difficult [matters]. Indeed, truthful God ordained for those who make requests loyally and with complete faith that, 'wherever two or three [people] assemble in my name, whatever they seek from my Father will be given to them.' Now if God grants whatever two or three sincere petitioners request, how much more will He grant the requests of such a multitude, and quickly. [40] This is especially so because the petitions are made untiringly, with fervent sighs and sincere hope. Perhaps He will grant much more than is requested.

"As regards what you said about me, that I should join with you, God forbid that I should be the betrayer of our correct faith and betray the wandering sheep of my fold [*i.e.*, Artashes] to the scorn of non-believers. Despite the fact that he is blameworthy, nonetheless, having received holy baptism, he is knowledgeable regarding the question of salvation and has heard the good news preached in the Gospel of Life. Were it a question of taking this injured sheep of my church to a healthy physician, I would do so quickly and without delay, but I [g21] will never consent to offer up my son whose soul is sick to that most disease-ridden tribunal. Were it a question of taking [Artashes] before a believing king for reprimand, I might make bold to do it with the hope of saving [him] from ruin. But I will not agree to denounce a believer's sins before a non-believer. In this my teacher is Paul who protested: 'When one of you has a grievance against a brother, does he dare go to law before the unrighteous instead of the saints? Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is to be judged by you, are you incompetent to try trivial cases? [41] Do you not know that we are to judge angels? How much more, matters pertaining to this life! If then you have such cases, why do you lay them before those who are least esteemed by the church! I say this to your shame. Can it be that there is no man among you wise enough to decide between members of the brotherhood, but brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers?' [I Corinthians 6].

And now, how could I, who have advised others, not take my own advice? I would rather die than have a believer betrayed to an unbeliever, because of his unworthy deeds. Even if they be prostitutes, they bear the seal of Christ's flock upon themselves. They are physically corrupt, but are not unbelievers and pagans; foul, but not fire-worshippers; womanizers, but not worshippers of the elements. They are ill with one disease, but are not infected with all diseases as the impious are. And why should we plot to destroy someone with a few failings by betraying him to someone who is a complete blasphemer? May such thoughts be far from you, my children. Plan it not, and do not attempt, as some of your ancestors did, to destroy your natural/native lords."

[42] The blessed *kat'oghikos* tirelessly spoke these words and many others of counsel with many tears and entreaties before the Armenian nobility, but was unable to get them to retreat from their earlier unity and from the position which they had fixed in their minds. For the curse of that holy man of God, Nerses, had descended upon them. They had fallen under the burden of evil service to pagans, and the affair would not end until the matter came to a head. [The nobles] united replied to the blessed patriarch: "Because you did not heed our words and refused to ally with us, know that just as we are resolved not to have [Artashes] rule over us as king, any longer, so we promise that you shall not reign as patriarch over our land for long." When all the senior *tanuters* of the land of Armenia [g22] had thus spoken before the patriarch Sahak, they departed, angered at his advice. Nor did they want to turn to the venerable patriarch Sahak again. For the curse of the venerable patriarch Nerses had surrounded and enveloped them [because of] their plan, leading to total destruction.

[43] 14. Thereafter, united, [the *naxarars*] went to the court and later stood in the presence of the Iranian king Vahram. Among them was a presbyter named Surmak from the Bznunik' district, from the village known as Arcke. He was descended from the line of the district's priests. Having allied with the Armenian *naxarars*, and having broken with the counsel of the blessed patriarch Sahak, he spoke more coarsely and crudely about king Artashes in the presence of the Iranian nobles than did all the Armenian *naxarars*. He befriended the Armenian *naxarars* because some of the Armenian nobles had promised him the throne of the *kat'oghikosate* of the land of Armenia. First they informed Suren and other Iranian nobles about the cause of their unhappiness, since Suren Pahlaw, at that time was *hazarapet* of the royal court. He and others of the court grandees saw to it that the complaint reached Vahram, king of Iran.

[44] When the king of Iran heard such protest from the *azatuni* he did not permit them to speak a moment before [their] adversary had come to court. He immediately sent an emissary to king Artashes of Armenia ordering [Artashes] to come to him at once. He wrote that the great patriarch of Armenia, Sahak, was to come with him. When they had come to court, the king of Iran first questioned Artashes king of Armenia separately, as king: "What happened that the *naxarars* of Armenia are accusing you"? He replied: "I have no idea what slander they are saying about me. But it is their natural custom to be hostile to their own lords. Following their custom, they now want to implement this wicked deed. For they have always changed their princes and have hated their lords." Then Vahram, king of the Aryans, commanded that the blessed *kat'oghikos* of Armenia be summoned into his presence alone. For he exalted him first, because of the man's lineage, and second, [45] because God shows his blessed servants to be respected and revered in the presence of unbelievers. [Vahram] inquired of the venerable *kat'oghikos*, hoping to hear him [confirm] all the words of the slanderers of Armenian kings. But [Sahak] responded: "I do not know what they say about him. Let them speak, and you listen to it from them. And may they themselves be requited according to what they say in your presence. Do not ask me anything about that matter, for you will hear nothing from me of slander, be it good or bad."

King Vahram then summoned Suren *pahlaw* his *hazarapet* who was of the same *azg* and *tohm* as the great patriarch [g23] Sahak to get [Sahak] also to unite with the other *naxarars* of Armenia, to testify to their slander. Then he would be returned to the authority of his *kat'oghikosate* and land, covered with many honors

and in great luxury. Suren took the king's message to the venerable Sahak promising him, as Vahram said, great luxury, and saying he would benefit from the king: "If you consent and do as he wants—to confirm the testimony of the Armenian *naxarars*—you will return to your authority, exalted by many honors. But if you stubbornly resist and do otherwise, you will lose your [46] *kat'oghikosal tun* and will be rejected from your authority. Because we are of the same *azg*, I want what is good for you. It is not lightly that I give you this loving advice." With such words did [Suren] try to persuade the blessed patriarch Sahak. For they wanted to do away with the kingdom.

But the holy man would in no way consent to such words and confirm the testimony of the Armenian princes. Rather, holding firm to his beliefs, he said: "I know of no evil committed by Artashes which merits trial and contempt by you. For though according to our holy faith he is worthy of dishonor and disgrace, according to your polluted faith, he deserves praise and exaltation."

When Suren heard this reply from Sahak, the great patriarch of Armenia, a man of his own *tohm*, he went and related it to the king of the Aryans. The king became furiously enraged and ordered that the Armenian *naxarars* and Artashes should be questioned before the great multitude of the tribunal. The princes of Armenia heaped many obscenities and diverse unworthy remarks on their [47] king, not talking about what had actually happened, but in a hostile manner causing him much damage through embellishments. Though they disowned Artashes, things were not as they said, and those listening did not believe them. But they had resolved to abolish the Arsacid line's rule in the kingdom. [The Iranians] wanted this all the more] when the king of the Aryans with all of the nobility of the court heard [the following remarks] from Artashes' accusers: "What need is there any more for a king? Rather, let an Iranian prince come to oversee us from time to time and, learning of our loyalty or disloyalty, tell you about it."

When Vahram, and all the nobility of the court, heard this he was delighted and ordered immediately that Artashes be removed from the kingship. At the same time [he ordered] that the *kat'oghikosal tun* be taken from [g24] saint Sahak, and possessed by the court since [Sahak] had [48] not joined in giving testimony with the *naxarars* of Armenia. So resolved, the order of the Iranian king was implemented. Thereafter the rule was taken from the Arsacid line in the sixth year of Artashes. This happened in accordance with the word of the venerable man of God, the great patriarch Nerses. And the land of Armenia fell under the burden of servitude to the impious authority of the Iranians. Resembling the silver which Joseph's brothers took from the Ismaelite merchants for him, so for betraying, a price was paid by the kings of Iran to the Armenian princes, [and they were also given] honors and greatness. Thus leaving the court, they came to their own land.

15. The Armenian *tanuters* who had promised the *kat'oghikosate* to the presbyter Surmak Arckec'i, seated him on the throne of the *kat'oghikosate* of Armenia. But a short time later, resisted by some princely generals of Armenia, they rejected and removed him from the authority of the *kat'oghikosate*. Thereafter an Iranian *marzpan* was sent to the land of Armenia by Vahram king of Iran. Then [the Armenians] fell completely under the burden of servitude to the impious Iranian people. The curse of the [49] great patriarch Nerses was thus realized. [This curse had been pronounced] because of the daily increase in deeds of impure wickedness within the royal Arsacid *tohm* which they were always shamelessly doing with enthusiastic boldness. When saint Nerses observed the unjust death which Arshak treacherously inflicted on his own brother's son Gnel, he was especially aroused and was unable to tolerate such impious deeds. Thus Nerses, the holy man of God, with an enraged heart said [the following], as is written in the 15th *charh* in the Second History (= P'awstos): "You wrought very great evils, more than did your father Tiran, more than your other ancestors who were evil and unrighteous [members] of the Arsacid line. You did not strive to resemble the good and virtuous men of your *tohm*, who, having inherited the honor of the kingship of their fathers, strived even more to be the heirs of [their] good deeds of virtue. But [in your case] day by day, without embarrassment you increased and carried out all kinds of [50] obscenities. Moreover, you found reason to shed the innocent blood of your nephew, Gnel. Now you will be dumped on the ground like water which had been used for washing, and you

will weaken when the bow from On High is strung. And the destruction described by the prophet will be visited upon you: 'The Arsacid line will drink the last [g25] cup. You will drink, become drunk, be destroyed, and not reestablished.'" Other heavy and awesome additions were made to the words pronounced by the blessed patriarch over the Arsacid line.

Then the *naxarars* of Armenia requested a *kat'oghikos* from the court, and king Vahram gave them a certain Syrian named Brk'isho. He came to the land of Armenia with people from his district who had come with him from Syria practising their dissolute religion, in accordance with their custom, with mistresses. And they did not live in accordance with the holy and pure religion which had been set and established in all the churches of Armenia by the blessed champion Gregory. The grandee *tanuters* of Armenia, the senior *sepuhs* and the entire multitude of the people became disgusted with the behavior of the people who had [51] come with the *kat'oghikos* Brk'isho which in no way resembled the canon and doctrine of the angelic faith set forth by the blessed champion Gregory who taught, nourished, and established all according to heavenly policy. The marvellous priests of the holy Church who had been ordained by the right hand of the blessed patriarch Sahak—which resembled an Apostle's—mourned and wept even more unconsolably. Unable to long endure such a foul and unworthy arrangement, they scorned Brk'isho and rejected him from the patriarchate of Armenia. They told king Vahram that "His customs and ways are not those of the teachings of our land. Give us another man as a leader, someone of our native order, who will be a supervisor, and firmly keep the order of the holy Church." King Vahram acceded to their request, and gave them as *kat'oghikos* another Syrian named Shamuel. He came to the land of Armenia and conducted himself in accordance with Brk'isho's faith. After a short while [Shamuel] died in the land of Armenia.

[52] 16. Then the senior *sepuhs* and the entire multitude of the covenant of the Church and the people, men and women, assembled and lamented [the loss of] the blessed, pure, and virtuous doctrine which saint Gregory and his sons had fostered and caused to grow within them, who had preached the correct and true teaching to all listeners. They themselves, like the blessed Apostles, had received this teaching not from humankind, not from mortal hands, but through the grace of the Holy Spirit. Once again, united, they assembled and clasped the feet of the blessed man of God, Sahak. With mournful entreaties and copious tears they threw themselves before the true [g26] patriarch, and said:

"We have sinned before Heaven and before you. Pardon us sinners, and imitate your ancestor the pious Gregory who overlooked the severe torments and batterings he was subjected to by our ancestors. Rather try to resemble the Creator of us all, who repaid the evils visited upon him with good and showed in every way to those who believed in Him, heaven-bound conduct and the path to recognition of God. And He taught everyone to constantly [53] say: 'Forgive our trespasses as we forgive those who have trespassed against us.' Now you, who were our constant *vardapet*, imprint His glory within your own person, follow the same example of patience, and forgive our trespasses. And we shall endeavor and request that the court [re]establish you on your native patrimonial throne of the *kat'oghikosate* of the Holy Church through which we were illuminated and saw that unattainable sun of justice. Let the clear and limpid doctrine of the holy patriarch Gregory (who was like an Apostle) not be mixed with the erroneous teaching [of the Syrians]. For weak and dissolute leaders have weakened the seal of traditions of the saint's unadulterated preaching, and lo! we and our offspring will suffer an eternal loss."

Although the entire multitude in unison spoke these and many other words of entreaty for many days, morning and night without cease, to the blessed [Sahak] they were entirely unable to change the mind of that upright man [to accept] their emotional requests. Rather [Sahak] tranquilly replied to all of them:

"I did not learn from the heavenly Creator and from Christ's *vardapet* to get angry at anyone. For [Christ] on the Cross beseeched his Father not to regard their actions as sins. And He always

protested to us, saying: "Bless your persecutors, and be [54] good to those who hate you.' But I am unable to rule as patriarch over a people which plots against, betrays, and kills its lord. For the Holy Spirit which gave us a second birth in the holy baptismal font allowing us to be co-inheritors of Christ, also said through that sublime man Paul 'Judge not, lest you be judged,' and 'Those of you who are able, eliminate the failings of the weak,' and 'Vengeance is mine and I shall exact it, said the Lord.' You should know yourselves. You sought vengeance on your king for his deeds, and, being furious at him, you betrayed the blessed faith of our covenant and permitted the infidels to ridicule it. By what means could you try to console me, and who could entreat me to be [your] shepherd? For I see that the injured sheep of Christ's flock, rather than being wrapped, and having its wounds dressed with oil and wine and [g27] placed upon a pack-animal and taken to a shelter; that sheep was mercilessly torn apart before wild beasts that devoured and divided it. Leave me alone and allow me to lament the general ruin of the land of Armenia which I see with my mind's eye through strength from On High. Do not try to force me to be consoled over the destruction of my people. [55] For heavenly providence revealed to me in a dream, before I was ordained a bishop that this disastrous circumstance would develop. [It was] like the prophetic vision which was shown to the holy martyr Gregory, and was knowledge of things to come. My troubled heart forces me to relate this to you today and appear as incensed as the blessed Paul who was sent by God, who, because of false apostles and impious servants wrote boasting of the feats of his asceticism to the Corinthians. Now listen thoughtfully all you multitudes of people and I shall tell you."

[Translator's note: the lengthy later interpolation known as the vision of St. Sahak (GhP I, 17) has not been translated here.] [g28]

18. When the multitude of Armenia's *awags*, *tanuters*, *sepuhs* and the dense multitude of the people heard all of these words from the blessed patriarch Sahak they began to weep in terror. Thereafter no one dared to remark on or talk about such matters with the holy man.

[56] After this, the virtuous one withdrew from all pursuits of the troubled world and occupied himself solely with prayers and doctrine. There were many bishops and other venerable priests who were unable to bear being separated from the ever-flowing streams of his holy doctrine [and came to him] wherever he was, at *ostan* or in the country. [Sahak] lived for many years and having reached deep old age, he died peacefully in the village named Blur in the district of Bagrewand. [This occurred in 439], at the beginning of the second year of the reign of Vahram's son Yazkert [II, 439-57] king of Iran, on the 30th day of the month of Nawarsard on the second hour of the day. As we know accurately the day of the saint's birth, from the History of the venerable Koriwn so we surely know that the saint died on the same day, in the same month, as he was born.

The blessed man of God, Sahak, had no male offspring, only a daughter who was wed to Hamazasp, lord of the Mamikoneans and *sparapet* of Armenia. She bore three sons [57] to Hamazasp: the blessed Vardan, the blessed Hmayeak and the venerable Hamazaspean. [Sahak] sealed [a document] and gave them the property of his villages and fields and whatever else belonged to him. He gave it in inheritance to them and to their children in perpetuity. Raising his hand [Sahak] bestowed many blessings upon them and bade them to retain the doctrine of the command of saint Gregory who had taught and preached truthfully throughout all of the land of Armenia—to revere and worship the one true God, Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The coveted remains of this blessed man were taken [g37] by a multitude of priests and *azats* to [Sahak's] own native *sephakan* village named Ashtishat in the district of Taron. There they built a repository for the saint and placed the pure body of this just man in a place fit for the honest. They also built a glorious church there and a martyrium for the saints and adorned [them] with precious and costly [58] vessels. They established at the spot a monastery for a multitude of clerics, establishing continual maintenance of produce

for the ease of the elderly [members] of the brotherhood. The *azats* and priests of the district established at that place (with enthusiastic popular support) yearly assemblies [where] from time to time and with the voluntary support of the masses of people and [the participation of] a great number of people who had come from distant places, they commemorated the day of his death. Much benefit for the healing of every sort of disease was obtained from the saint's relics. And with joyous hearts they would return to their own dwelling.

19. Six months after the repose of saint Sahak, the venerable Mashtoc' died in the city of Vagharshapat (also called Nor Kaghak' ["New City"]). This took place on the 13th day of the month of Mehekan [*Mehekan*: February. The seventh month of the Arm. calendar]. Vahan, prince of the Amatunik', [59] took the body of this virtuous man to his own village called Oshakan. The tomb of the venerable one was made with very great distinctions, and all the multitudes of the peoples of Ayrarat hold a feast in his honor with the most diligent respect.

By order of the venerable Mashtoc,' the blessed Yovsep' succeeded on the throne of the patriarchate of the land of Armenia. [Yovsep'] was from the village named Xoghoc 'imk ' in the district of Vayoc' Jor. Through the intercession of these departed men, the land of Armenia was graced with the worship of orthodox religion. This [situation] lasted until [A.D. 451] the 12th year of the reign of Yazkert [II, 439-57] son of king Vahram of Iran.

End of this part.

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## Part Two

20. King Yazkert had a *hazarapet* named Mihrnerseh who was a malicious, malignant person. For many years he had been thinking about an impious plan, leading to the destruction and ruin of feeble souls. In this poisonous long-meditated scheme, [Mihrnerseh] had as a wicked assistant and impious supporter a man from the Siwnik' *tohm*, named Varazvaghan. Just as Satan in Paradise used a snake as an accomplice and deceived the First-Created, so [Mihrnerseh] attempted to satisfy his bitter will by means of him. This Varazvaghan was the son-in-law of Vasak, prince of Siwnik'. According to some, there was great hatred between Varazvaghan and the daughter of the prince of Siwnik'. Consequently the girl's father looked at his son-in-law with heavy resentment. He sought to avenge the insults shown to his daughter by plotting to kill [Varazvaghan] and thus persecuted him until he left the land of Armenia.

[61] When the malicious Varazvaghan realized the incredible rancor of Vasak, and was unable to tolerate the severe violence of his father-in-law because of the mighty authority which he exercised in the period of his principedom, he fled to the country of Iran, to Mihrnerseh, *hazarapet* of the Aryans. He soon had the diabolical idea of becoming the director of the destruction of the land, and in this plan of wickedness he accepted the encouragement and will of Mihrnerseh. He had the impious idea of uniting with the devil, and, apostasizing the truth, he worshipped the sun and the moon—elements established by the Creator to serve humankind. The impious Varazvaghan voluntarily separated from and rejected the blessed and just preaching of Life which the martyr and apostle of Armenia, Gregorios (who bore many very great sorrows) with tireless prayers and perpetual requests day and night implanted as a seed and nurtured in every soul. He entered the fire-temple and stated that the fire was a god. Apostasizing [g39] the inseparable, united holy Trinity, he became the cup-bearer of poison for the ruination of souls and of all weak-minded individuals, by means of the impious Mihrnerseh. This bitter prince Mihrnerseh then became *vardapet* to the loathsome *sepuh* of Siwnik',



Varazvaghan, who instructed the latter day and [62] night, saying: "Look with your mind's eye, and behold such a kingdom as this one: mighty, and above all other kingdoms. [See] the power of the cavalry, the discipline and organization of the army which causes all observers and listeners, obedient and disobedient, to shiver with fear. [See] too the clearly choice, correct, and attractive faith which befits this great kingdom. For who in the entire world does not see the glory of the sun (whose rays illuminate all rational and irrational beings), or the usefulness of fire (with which all are fed, and which enjoy), or the elements or the breath of sweet air (by which plants and seeds sprout and reach maturity) which offer humankind the good life, and happiness. Now while those [people] who are not obedient to us see all of this, they do not comprehend it, for unlike us they lack our great wisdom and *xrad* of good sense. Such people are unable to recognize the gods and the benefits which are given to humankind by each god in every decision, and clearly the gods are angered when they cannot make the foolish realize the benevolence which they bestow on the land. But the peoples who have submitted to our great authority, yet adhere to such [63] awesome and severe rules against the realm are eternally lost, while we will be punished for it, for sinning against the gods. [?]"

When this senseless doctrine of the wily teacher Mihrnerseh was heard by his crazed pupil, Varazvaghan, the latter (stupified by Satan who polluted his mind) could not question the dull *vardapet* how a god who is himself lacking and incomplete could grant the requests of another. One can give what he has to the seeker of it, and one can give a part of what he has received from another, to the seeker. But clearly one cannot bestow on another what he himself does not have. For should someone who is hot and in need of cooling request it from the heat, he will not receive it. Rather, the seeker is regarded as extremely foolish by everyone and [g40] deserving of ridicule. Even the seeker knows that if he asks for something he needs from someone who does not have it, he is unable to give it. To request it from such a one, with many entreaties and protracted pleading, is senseless and full of mortification—as it would be to seek dryness from water, moisture from fire, coolness from the sun, or light from the night. While these [individual] parts indeed have power, it was given to them by God Who stipulated it, and they are obliged to ceaselessly give it to the world—not by their own will, but rather at the command of their Creator Who is the true God, creator of all fulfillment of time and of the elements—of heat, cold, dryness, dampness, light and darkness, and God contains all of them within Himself. To those who worthily request things from Him, He gives and totally accomplishes, according to each person's needs and wants."

The impious Varazvaghan had learned all of this from childhood and knew it well. But submerged in the envy of impiety against his father-in-law, this denier of God, [Varazvaghan], urged on by the devil with whom he had allied, and who had stained his heart, had conceived of the following plan: "This wisdom and the efforts I have undertaken may bring me one of two results. Either the land of Armenia will accept [Zoroastrianism] and apostasize, in which case I will merit great gifts and honor from the Aryans, as the loyal individual who first conceived of and facilitated such an important and great affair. Or, [failing that] should [65] [the Armenians] reject and resist it, they will be unable to resist such a great [military] force [as Iran] and will be completely ruined, with their Houses and belongings, and perhaps my enemy will be lost in this situation. And even if I receive not a single benefit from it, it will be more than enough for me to hear of and witness the destruction of my enemy—even more [satisfying] than [achieving] all the benefits and greatness in the world." Divine providence did not forget all of these wicked thoughts of the impious *sepuh* from Siwnik' and his son, [thoughts which Varazvaghan] had brought to a head. Indeed, from this time on God's righteous judgement requited him with a verdict befitting his deeds. For [Varazvaghan] became an object of ridicule to his entire *tohm*, and to the people of [his] district: for many years he was tormented by his adviser, his *dew*, in the presence of everyone, becoming a constant spectacle. He fell to the ground foaming in senselessness and was unable to say that he had sinned. Consequently, when the *dew* found that the man had been abandoned by the care of God, he afflicted him for a long time with severe, unbelievable torments and afflictions until [the *dew*] choked him. He left to his son the remnants of his stinking, foul-tasting dish, as is written in the sixteenth psalm: [66] "They were satiated with their meal—of pork, as another translation has it—and left the remnants to their children." In the next world he will receive recompense for his sins, in Tartaros he will be

kept in the inextinguishable Gehenna [g41], and betrayed to the eternal and unpassable flames. [This recalls] yet another apparition, the prophetic vision which appeared to the blessed champion Gregory from God. [In this vision], he saw the classes of black goats which, after washing in the fountain of Life, were turned to the glittering white color of ether and shone like the sun. Half of those who had so washed turned back and, crossing through the water, they changed from being like white sheep to being black wolves, attacked the lambs and made a carnage. Resembling those lambs which were transformed into wolves, that man from the *tohm* of Siwnik' was the cause of the loss of many people, and of the destruction of the land of Armenia.

[67] 21. When the impious Mihrnerseh heard all of these words, he was delighted since he had found in the demoniac Varazvaghan a support for his poison and an implementer of his own wicked scheme. [Mihrnerseh] delightedly went into the presence of Yazkert, and began speaking with him alone: "It is fitting that Lords who benefit from their servants think not only about the attractiveness of profits, but about the saving of souls, so that the souls of the servants not be lost. For just as you are concerned about your profits and taxes [*vasn k'o shahic'n ew harkac'*], so that you benefit therefrom, so the gods regard the saving of souls warmly and like to see it. To do something worthy of the gods—no one can say what gifts and honors the gods have stored up and hold for such a one—to say nothing about someone who plans to lead numerous souls from error to the road [ranking] among the just those [formerly] accursed. The glory and luxuries which the gods have prepared for such [evangelists] no one can describe in words, or write down. [68] Now how many lands are there in which you rule as a god [*Ard' k'ane ashxarhk' en, orum duk' ishxek' astuacabar*], where you can kill or spare whomever you chose? First and foremost there is the great land of Armenia which is useful [*Ew nax arhajin` orpes Hayoc' mec ashxarhn pitoy e ew ogtakar*], and with [Armenia] is Iberia and Aghbania/Aghuania. You see only the benefits which you receive from the lands, but the great and important [issue]—that such a host of souls are being lost—you never think or worry about. Nor do you realize how much this would recommend you to the gods. For, should you look to the salvation of so many people, be assured that it will increase and benefit the present greatness of your kingdom with the good folk and grandeur which is there. I see very great benefits in this important matter for the Aryan world. For you yourself and all the Aryans know Armenia as a large and [g42] useful land. It is close to and borders the emperor's realm, and has the same faith and worship, since the emperor has authority over them. If you get them accustomed to our [69] faith and they become familiar with it and able to acknowledge that until then they had been strayed but now had come onto the path—then they will love you and the land of the Aryans, and will reject and withdraw from the emperor, his faith, and land. Thereafter that land [of Armenia] will be firmly bound to us in affection and unity. When the hearts of the Armenians belong to us, [the hearts of] the Iberians and Aghbanians/Aghuans will also be ours. Although I already was concerned about such a great matter and planned to point it out to you, I was made even more sure by a man from the *tohm* of Siwnik'. He knew enough to leave the errant faith he had held until then, and to adopt our true and firm faith which he did voluntarily and enthusiastically. From him I learned and confirmed yet more the spiritual and material benefits which would come from such a matter both to your kingdom and generally to the entire Aryan world. Now since this man, with firm affection, gave himself over [to Zoroastrianism] and chose the good, he is deserving of more prominent glory and even more honor than all of his comrades and members of his *tohm*, so that when his *tohm* and all the Armenian nobility observe the very great benefits and luxuries given by you and visible on him, motivated by envy to have such a life and [70] such good things, the prominent [Armenians] will quickly try to surpass each other in implementing your will, and will enthusiastically obey your order(s). Should this come to pass, the kingdom of the land of the Aryans will always be at peace and ease; should this not come to pass, I suspect that in the future [the Armenians] who hold to [the Byzantines'] faith, perhaps will want to serve them [militarily] as well, and that no small amount of suspicion of the land of the Aryans will result."

When Yazkert, king of Iran, heard all of these agreeable words from his malicious, evil-minded *hazarapet* Mihrnerseh, he liked and praised them, and informed the mages and the other Aryan nobility of everything Mihrnerseh had said. All the Aryans generally were astonished at and lauded the counsel [and so Yazkert]

quickly summoned the mage, had the principles of magianism written down and sent to Armenia. He sent a *hrovartak* to all the Armenian nobility, having the following import:

[71] 22. "Former kings, who were my ancestors and occupied this royal throne—either because they were not at leisure or, because they did not think about such weighty and important affairs, I know not which—did not concern themselves with these matters. But now, informed by the mages and other wise and senior men of the land of the Aryans, I am thinking that just as we enjoy the benefits and other service from those people under the authority of our kingdom we are therefore even [g43] more obliged to show concern for and find salvation for everyone's souls. Our faith informs us that we will suffer heavy punishment from the gods should we be found indifferent with regard to this great trust. Now if we are to be punished for not demanding a certain thing from you, you should be even more frightened about laziness regarding the benefits to each person's soul, because [in that case] you will be punished both by us, and by the gods. Accordingly, we have had our correct and just faith written down, and brought to you. As you are a useful land and beloved by us, we want you to study our just and balanced faith and to hold it, and not to worship the faith which we all clearly know is false and without benefit. Now, [72] having heard our command, implement it willingly and gladly and do not even think of doing otherwise. We also want and are ordering you to write us [the principles] of your so-called faith so that [we can see] how lost you have been till today. And when, as we, you become people who recognize our true faith, then the Iberians and Aghbanians/Aghuans will not dare to stray from what we and you want."

23. When all the Armenian nobility had received this *hrovartak*, read everything contained in it and knew that [Yazkert] had also sent them the principles of their impious faith in a written form, they realized that this was the covert arrow of the enemy so bitter and full of poison which had come from them, cleverly shot at the unblemished flock of Christ. The rational assembly of the blessed flock of Christ was saddened and dismayed, and discussed matters. "Perhaps," they said, "furthered by weak-minded and glory-seeking individuals among the sceptical men, the arrow, (*i.e.*, Zoroastrianism) will wickedly strike root and many will be ruined, having strayed from the correct and just faith of Christ."

[73] Then, at the command of the *tanuters* of Armenia, there assembled the holy bishops (according to the districts of the land of Armenia), the venerable priests and monks. [Their names] are as follows:

Yovsep' [The text, asterisked by the editors, begins *Ew Yovsep'* "And Yovsep'," indicating, perhaps, that the list is incomplete] (who, though [only] a priest by ordination, at the time held the throne of the *kat'oghikosate* of Armenia.

lord Anania, bishop of Siwnik'  
lord Mushe, bishop of Arcrunik'  
lord Sahak, bishop of Taron  
the blessed Sahak, bishop of Rhshtunik'  
lord Melite, bishop of Manjkert  
lord Eznik, bishop of Bagrewand  
lord Surmak, bishop of Bznunik'  
lord T'at'ik, bishop of Basen  
lord Eremia, bishop of Mardastan  
lord Gad, bishop of Vanand  
lord Basil, bishop of Mekk'  
lord Eghbayr, bishop of Anjewac'ik'  
lord Tachat, bishop of Tayk'  
[74] lord K'asun, bishop of Tarberun [*Tarberunoy episkopos*]

lord Zawe'n, bishop of Mananaghik'  
lord Eghishe, bishop of Amatunik'  
lord Eremia, bishop of Apahunik'

All of these men were bishops. Among the honorable priests were: the blessed Ghewond, and Xoren from Mren, and Dawit' and other honorable priests and many senior monks together with lord Aghan of the Arcrunid line, a marvellous man of angelic faith. Among those assembled from the *naxarars* were:

Vasak, lord of Siwnik'  
Nershapuh, lord of Arcrunik'  
Vriw Maghxaz  
Vardan, lord of the Mamikoneank ' and the *sparapet* of Armenia  
Giwat, lord of Vahewunik'  
Artak, lord of Mokk'  
Shmawon, lord of Anjewac'ik'  
Manech, lord of Apahunik'  
Arhawan, lord of Vanand  
Arshawir, lord of Arsharunik'  
Vahan, lord of Amatunik'  
[75] Atom, lord of Gnunik'  
Varazshapuh, lord of Palu  
Hrahat, lord of Ashoc'k'  
Hmayeak, lord of Dimak'sean  
Gazrik, lord of Abegheank'  
P'ap'ag, lord of Arhawegheank'  
Vren Jiwnakan

All of these senior *tanuters*, with senior *sepuhs*, pious bishops, senior priests and monks wrote the following reply to the *hrovartak*, addressed to king Yazkert and to all the nobility at court:

24. "In the radiant and true precepts of our faith—which to you seems futile and nonsensical—it is written: 'Servants, obey your temporal lords as [you would obey] God.' We, exhorted first by the command of our faith, and then by your great kingdom, to the extent of our ability have it in mind to serve you not merely out of human fear, for appearances, after the example of evil servants. [76] Rather [we wish] to implement your will and order fully, voluntarily and enthusiastically. [We wish] to serve you not only with material expenses [*och' miayn karaswoy caxiwk'*]. Rather we will shed our blood and the blood of our sons for your sake. But concerning the salvation or loss of our souls, do not in any way trouble yourselves. And should, as you fear, your gods reward or punish because of our souls—as you said—may God administer that benefit or punishment on us and on our souls. If we are quiet on that matter, forgive us. Because, just as it is impossible for human natures to alter one divine providence to another, similarly it is impossible for us who naturally have studied and grown firm in this faith, to obey such a command and accept it. We cannot hear even a single word about this, because we simply do not want to.

"Now regarding the precepts of your faith which you had written down and brought to us, we shall never listen to you. When we are at court, [what we have heard about Zoroastrianism] there and/or from the mages (who are styled your "teachers of the faith") we have subjected to ridicule [g45]. [77] [How much more we would ridicule] what you have written and are urging us to read and obey, something which we neither need nor want. Rather, to honor your kingdom even more, we have desired not even to open and read what you have written. We recognize those precepts as false and

the nonsense of a stupid person. As we have heard them many times from your false, so-called *vardapets* and are as well-informed about them as you are, there is no need for us to read or hear them. Indeed, were we to read them, we would be forced to ridicule them which would make us enemies of those precepts, their initiators [*orensdirk'*] as well as those who worship such falsehood. Consequently we did not deem it fitting and appropriate to write down the precepts of our faith and have them brought to you, as you ordered. For if we did not consider the precepts of your false religion (which merits ridicule), unworthy of being read—but which, in your great wisdom you thought to have written down and brought to us—since you would be alienated from us for laughing at [78] them, why then should we write down the God-loving and correct precepts of our faith and send it to you to be ignorantly ridiculed and hated. Let this much only be clear to you about our beliefs: we do not serve the elements, the sun and moon, wind and fire as you do. Nor do we revere the many gods which you name on the earth and in the sky [*ew bazum astuacoc'd, zor anuanek'd duk' i yerkri ew i yerkni`*]. For we have learned about and firmly serve the one sole true God Who made heaven and earth and everything upon them. He alone is God whom you have called gods, the creator, king of kings and lord of lords. It is proper for all rational beings to worship and revere only Him."

25. The holy priests assembled there wrote all these words in the letter; then, together with all the *naxarars* of Armenia they had it taken to Yazkert, king of the Aryans. He ordered the mages and all the senior personages of the court to be assembled, had the letter sent by the Armenians opened, and read in the presence of all. The king, the mages, and the entire nobility of the court heard the words of the letter. Seized with rage [Yazkert] asked the mages and the entire Aryan nobility: "What do you [79] think of servants who write to their lord with such bold audacity?" The class of mages and all the grandee nobility of the court stood up and said: "They have written to us regarding the destruction of themselves and of their land. But now you must be bold to acquaint them with your lordship and their status as servants." The king and all the nobility became yet more aroused and the view was expressed that: "If they did not have hopes of expecting aid from some quarter, they would never have dared to consider this, let alone write it in a letter and send it to your kingdom." The malicious Mihrnerseh said this [g46].

When king Yazkert heard this from all the mages and all the court nobility, he became even more enraged and commanded that *hrovartaks* be written immediately to the land of Armenia, to Iberia and to Aghbania/Aghuania. And in the *hrovartaks* he commanded that it be written that all the *tanuters* and senior *sepuhs* of the three lands should come to the court swiftly and without delay. And he said: "Should anyone lazily delay he will be put to death without any clemency." When the *hrovartaks* reached the three lands of Armenia, Iberia, and Aghbania/Aghuania and were read in the presence [of the nobility], as soon as they learned that all of them had been summoned with such urgency, they knew at [80] once what was afoot, that the urgent summonses did not bode peace but the ruination of their souls. In despair they lamented and took refuge in God's assistance.

The three lands then sent delegations to one another, made a pact, and confirmed it with many vows sworn on the Gospels. They thought that if they did not go [to court] they would be considered to be in rebellion, but they were in agitated doubt about going. They considered it better to go, and called on God's help to find a way out for them. However, with the intercession of the holy Gospels, they confirmed with each other to unitedly and boldly hold to their thoughts, words, and plans, saying: "Yes, let us go, but let us not consent to apostasizing the Creator of heaven and earth. God will arrange this for us if we show ourselves as part of Christ's body and soul, recalling the blessed Apostles, the sermons of the holy Church which are of one heart and soul. May their intercession correct our answers before the awesome king, our Saviour, Lord Jesus Christ, and protect us from the attack of the wicked beast which is coming against us. But should someone decide to [81] violate this oath of unity and apostasize the Son of man, as [Christ] Himself said, that person will be rejected by Him before the Father and the angels of heaven [Matthew 10, 33; Luke 12, 9]."

Thus united by oath and vow, [the nobility of] the three lands of Armenia, Iberia, and Aghbania/Aghuania went to court.

Members of the grandee nobility of Armenia who went on the journey at that time were as follows:

from the *tohm* of Siwnik,' Vasak, lord of Siwnik' who, at the time was the *marzpan* of Armenia,  
from the *tohm* of Arcrunik,' Nershapuh,  
from the *tohm* of Rshtunik,' Artak,  
from the *tohm* of Xorxorhunik,' Gadishoy,  
from the *tohm* of Mamikoneank,' Vardan, *asparapet* of Armenia, and lord of the Mamikoneank,'  
from the *tohm* of Mokk,' Artak,  
from the *tohm* of Apahunik,' Manech,  
from the *tohm* of Amatunik,' Vahan,  
from the *tohm* of Vahewunik,' Giwt,  
from the *tohm* of Anjewac'ik,' Shmawon,  
and from the land of Iberia, the *bdesht* Ashusha and other *tanuters* of the land.

[82]

26. When they all reached the court they went first before the grantees of the royal court, and then before [g47] king Yazkert. Yazkert, king of Iran, ordered that all the court nobility with the prominent mages should come before him in the palace the next day. The next day those whom the king mentioned did as he said.

He then ordered that those who had come from Armenia, Iberia, and Aghbania/Aghuania be brought before him. First [Yazkert] made inquiry of the Armenian *tanuters* and *sepuhs*: "First and foremost I want to hear from you how you regard me, and how you perceive yourselves." [The *tanuters* and *sepuhs*] responded together: "The perception and view [of who you are] is clear to all the Aryans and non-Aryans without hearing from us a reply to your order." But the king repeated his question: "It is clear and evident that those people who are under my authority would never dare to resist my order. But I want to hear from you, I want to know your understanding of this. How do you regard me? Tell me." They replied: "We recognize you as king, [king] of all, and especially our king. Like God, you have authority over us and over everyone in your kingdom, [the authority] to kill or spare [whom you chose]."

[83] When king Yazkert and all the court nobility heard such a response from them, he said: "Your answers are quite unlike and distant from those in the letter you had brought to me. For it is clear from the letter that there are some things in which you will serve us and our wishes and agree not to resist [our] command; but that there is some matter which I ought not speak of and which you cannot and will not accept. Now in our kingdom and among all the Aryans it is precisely that matter regarding you which is first and foremost the important and pertinent one, by which our lordship and guardianship over you is recognized, and your judicious service and obedience to us is acknowledged. For we are satisfied with the work and benefit(s) which to the present you have displayed toward us, the king, and toward the Aryan land. We want to dispatch you to your land with honor and very great glory. Only accept my will and look to the salvation of your souls. Turn from the road of ruin which till now you have been travelling like a blind person in the darkness. But should you Armenians, Iberians and Aghbanians/Aghuans think to do otherwise—as indeed, to the present you have held an erroneous faith—should [84] you stubbornly persist, then I shall regard your great benefit and labor as nothing. Rather, I shall wipe you out, with your women, children, and *azg* [g48]."

When the *azatani* of the three lands heard all these words about honor, the promises, and the death-threats from Yazkert, king of Iran, the others were silent for a moment. But then Vardan, lord of the Mamikoneans and the *sparapet* of Armenia, stepped forward fearlessly with bold intent and responded to king Yazkert

before the entire multitude and said: "There are many members of the nobility of these three lands [present] who are my seniors in *gah* and in age; and there are many who are lower than I. You, who are the lord of all, as well as all the Aryans well know of the labor and submission which I and each of these [nobles] have demonstrated to the present—labor and submission which servants must show to their lords and kings. There is no need for me or any of the others to familiarize you with each one's labor and service. As it was before, so now and hereafter I have resolved that were it possible for me to transform myself into many individuals, with more strength and enthusiasm than I presently have, I would give you my life and the goods in my *tun*, and exhaust myself for the lord of the Aryans and the land of the Aryans. But it is impossible to alter the faith which I learned from God, from my childhood, out of the fear of man. For I would consider myself pitiful if I were to apostasize the just doctrine which is firm in my mind (and which I regard as correct), even though received from a man; let alone to betray the faith which I received and studied from the mouth of God because of the fear of man and [to seek] futile glory. May it not be so. My response is that I would rather die than [85] live in apostasy, without God. As for the others who stand before you all, they are of the Christian order. It is enough for each one to answer that question for himself."

When the *azatani* from the three lands of Armenia, Iberia, and Aghbania/Aghuania heard the fearless response of the *sparapet* of Armenia, Vardan, and observed the king's extreme rage, they replied as follows: "May the king excuse us for a few days to consult with each other and to make you an answer in firm unity. For replying to this matter concerning the salvation or ruination of souls is an eternal matter. It is not right to speak in your presence hastily or with uncritical minds about something which has become such a great issue. For what you seek is the destruction of our ancestral, patrimonial and familiar tradition and the forcible adoption of a faith which was accepted and liked neither by our fathers, nor by us." The king and all the nobility accepted these words, granted them time, and dissolved the *atean* [g49].

27. Then all the *naxarars* who were from the three lands of Armenia, Iberia, and Aghbania/Aghuania assembled. They had doubts within themselves and took counsel to see by what stratagems and design they could find a way out of the situation. After a few days of much anguished thinking, for the moment they accepted and confirmed that "There is no way of getting free from the trap which Satan, the wicked hunter, has set for us unless temporarily, under pretext, we do what they have commanded. Then each of us shall go to his land and either live serving the true faith of Christ which the most blessed doctrine of the champion Gregory and his son acquainted us with through the [86] renewed birth of baptism; or, leaving the land, each one may go to dwell in exile with wife and children convinced of and finding refuge in the word of the life-giving Savior Who said: "When they persecute you in one city, flee to another [Matthew 10.23]." But were we to think solely of our own salvation and resist the prince's impious orders, we would cause the eternal ruination of a limitless multitude of men, women, old and young people. Those who would be brought here would be made to serve completely their impious religion, from generation to generation."

Now despite the fact that some had decided upon this independently, and that the same people had consulted together morning and evening for a few days, nonetheless they did not dare to reveal the plan of their alliance to the general of Armenia, Vardan, lord of the Mamikoneans. They realized that he would be unable to accept and consent to such a plan, since the faith founded upon the firm rock of Christ he held unshaken in his soul. Yet they were unable to bear not revealing and relating to him all of this, for they knew that without him all of their plans and designs and deeds would be defective and impossible to fulfill. While they thought that they might be able to escape through deceit, as planned, and to win over the king and all the Aryans of the tribunal and that each one might return to his country, nonetheless they knew that their plan and proposal would be insufficient. For everyone observed and knew it fully from books that all matters of this sort had naturally been accomplished by the Mamikonean *azg* and with their participation.

[87] Thinking these things over, all the *naxarars* and *sepuhs* who were assembled at court went together to Vardan, lord of the Mamikoneans and general of Armenia. Revealing their stratagem to him they related all of

the reasoning behind it, and what they proposed to do. All of them added to this their beseechings and entreaties, saying: "Do not look upon us with astonishment [g50]. See first the specter of the wicked calamities which will befall countless myriads of people. Bear in mind the sighs of mothers, the sobbing of children and the old men and women led into exile and the terrible miseries that all of them would endure. Although the physical labor and death that all would bear would be heavy, bitter and worthy of tears, such a fate is nothing compared to the physical and spiritual scandal and loss [they would face]. Nor is the impending danger of a transitory nature, for once plunged into the darkness of impiety, [the darkness] would thicken and adhere to our holy Church, people, women and offspring until eternity. Should you join in our strategem, if you are but able to convince yourself for a moment, we know that many of us shall find mercy, that all the churches of the three lands will not be ruined and that the entire population of the three lands will not be led into captivity. For the holy faith [of Christianity] will not be shaken to its foundations. And should it receive a temporary shock, it will thereafter stand firm and be made secure by the aid of the Omnipotent. This will certainly be the case if you, for a moment, will become diseased for our sake, since the most merciful physician, the Lord God, will heal us with you."

When Vardan, general of Armenia and lord of the Mamikoneans, heard all of these words from the *naxarars* of Armenia, Iberia, and Aghbania/Aghuania, in no way did he want to hear or accept them or in any way [88] participate in the plan. On the contrary, greatly agitated, he cried out to all of them: "May I not deny my Creator, either on a pretext or in actual fact before that impious and deadly [Iranian] people, because [Christ] will deny those who have denied Him before the Father and the holy angels. God forbid that in thinking about the sorrows and grief of women, children, and *azg*, I should forget the precept that 'Whoever loves his wife and children more than me, is unworthy of me.' Rather, you who have come from the three lands—*tanuters* and *sepuhs*—are full of all strength and goodness because of Christ's mercy. For if, in the fine arts you excell in all knowledge [*zi est azatut'ean aruesti arawealeal ek' amenayn hrahangi*w] and are recognized as prominent among the officers and among all peoples, in warfare and all types of bravery, you have learned the correct and just faith from God by means of the blessed champion Gregory—who was like an Apostle—and his son. Each of you must answer for himself and may do as you think. But as for me, one among you, do not ask me to actually do what I am unable to even hear of [g51]."

When the multitude of *naxarars* from the three lands heard all these words from Vardan, the general of Armenia and lord of the Mamikoneans, although they were plunged into unbelievable despair and were agitated, nonetheless, they could not entertain what had been proposed; knowing the great danger, [they sought] other means of entreaty. Gathering together, they summoned Artak the prince of Mokk' and urged him yet more, with tireless entreaties to sit and speak in [89] private with their *sparapet*, the lord of the Mamikonean *tohm*. He was a modest, intelligent and brave man, and Vardan lord of the Mamikoneans, liked Artak [and treated him] with special honor. Having consented to the Armenian *naxarars*' orders—to attempt to plead with and persuade [Vardan] with the utmost speed—Artak the prince of Mokk', did just that, [speaking with Vardan] as he was charged, sometimes alone, sometimes with the Armenian nobility. [The nobles] did not cease saying the same things and making the same entreaties to [Vardan], day and night for many days. Urging the other on most persistently and relentlessly was the *bdeshx* of Iberia, Ashusha, an intelligent and prudent man whose wife was of the Arcrunid *azg*.

Her sister was the wife of Vardan's brother, the great *sepuh* of the Mamikoneans. The aforementioned Ashusha further exhorted the entire multitude of the *naxarars* of Armenia and Artak, lord of Mokk' to communicate all of this without delay to Vardan, general of Armenia. Nor did [Ashusha] himself desist saying the same things [to Vardan]. He argued tirelessly, constantly pointing out to him that his refusal would cause extensive ruin for the three lands; while his acceptance and cooperation would result in the salvation of many people and the expectation of personal repentance.



When the *naxarars* and *sepuhs* of the three lands realized that the will of Vardan, the *sparapet* of Armenia, was unmoved and that he did not accept their exhortations and entreaties, they were obliged to bring and present him with proverbs from the Bible, appropriate for [90] the situation. This was done by those who were more learned in the Scriptures of the holy Church. Treating [Vardan] as a learned and informed man—he was extremely well acquainted with doctrinal writings, having been taught and advised by his grandfather, the holy patriarch Sahak—they reminded him what the blessed Paul had written about the Creator: "He who knows not his sin, sins against us." [They also cited] what Paul himself had written in the letter to the Romans. "Consent," they said, "and be the one who [g52] curses and makes proverbs about us. You are not greater and more just in faith than the blessed Apostle of Christ, Paul. But the Armenian, Iberian and Aghbanian/Aghuan people are more numerous than the crucifying Jewish people."

When the senior *tanuters* and *sepuhs* of the three lands aired so many words of this sort and made such fervent entreaties before Vardan, the general of Armenia, they then brought the holy Gospel and all of them placed their hands on it and swore: "If only on a pretext you will but temporarily consent to what the king has said, and free us from the attacks of the enemy who has set this trap for us, we shall hear and obey everything that you say, giving our lives for the blessed covenant, and shedding our blood for the salvation of the entire land. Should it happen that we choose to leave the land and all of our belongings and flee into exile with our women and children, we will gladly accept poverty and mendicancy. Let us only be spared this anger. Should someone out of weakness violate this oath and treacherously withdraw from the vow [made] on the holy Gospel, and withdraw from the alliance of this multitude—as did Judas, who quit the band of blessed Apostles—may he, without repentance and forgiveness, share [Judas'] fate, and be betrayed to the inextinguishable fires which [91] God has readied for Satan and his accomplices. May everlasting vengeance be sought from such an individual and from those who ally with him for whatever damage, captivity and agitation befall the three lands. As for the good and useful steadfastness which the Savior Christ has endowed many souls of the three lands, may it be the remaining legacy for the eternal salvation and pardon of your soul and of your *azg*, for your temporary acceptance of us."

When Vardan, the general of Armenia and the lord of the Mamikoneans, heard all these words from the mouths of the *azatani* of the three lands, and saw how all of them had sworn and sealed an awesome oath on the holy Gospel before them, with tears streaming down his face he agreed on a pretext to temporarily be wounded [in the faith] for the sake of the three lands and the multitudes of men and women inhabiting them.

28. Thus united, they all agreed to fallaciously implement the king's order. Going to the fire-temple, some of them—but not all—on pretexts and not sincerely, bowed their heads to that futile worship. Yet others, even though they knew about their eternal downfall, nonetheless, desirous of worldly glories, [willingly] exchanged the glory of [g53] incorruptible God for the corrupt and transitory life of this temporal world.

When the king of Iran and all the court grandees and mages saw this, they offered their gods diverse gifts with great delight. That day they held a great celebration of joy believing that an unshakable foundation had been laid for their kingdom, and that [92] thereafter they would dwell in peace, without fear of all enemies. Then were the *tanuters* and the *sepuhs* of the three lands of Armenia, Iberia, and Aghbania/Aghuania dressed and adorned in royal clothing. They were, moreover, all supplied with many and diverse sorts of gifts and honors, villages and fields in accordance with what suited each one. After saying farewell, each one hastened to his own land. They had been given a multitude of false *vardapets*, called mages, and exhorted to study the ridiculous [Zoroastrian] teaching with its grumbled, mumbled words which resemble the rattling of snakes and the growling of stomachs. They were ordered to set up schools of deceit across the land, and to instruct everyone, men and women, in the teaching of the mages.

Those who had [willingly] accepted [Zoroastrianism] were delighted to take the multitude of mages along with them. Then they went to bid farewell to king Yazkert and to the grandee nobility of the court, each [of

the Caucasian nobles] offering false praise and deceitful thanks according to his mental capacity at the moment to the king and all the Aryan nobility, especially to the wickedly poisonous Mihrnerseh. The thrust of their thanksgiving was as follows: "All kings who sat on that throne before you, your ancestors, liked us and cared about our condition, that it be flourishing, and about material benefits. But you have demonstrated even more affection toward us, for you thought [93] to acquaint and grant us eternal life. And if we served your ancestors with all enthusiasm and willingness, doing everything they ordered us, everyone should offer service to you not as though to one individual, but as though serving many individuals made into one [? *isk k'ez amenayn anjin part e och' ibrew zmi anjn spass matuc'anel, ayl orpes zbazum anjin zmi anjn arhnel...*], tirelessly serving your beneficial realm day and night, since you swiftly worried over the salvation of our erring souls."

Thus did each person give praise saying more or less the above, as he was able. Then they were silent. Now Vardan, the *sparapet* of Armenia and lord of the Mamikoneans, had chosen his words without recourse to pretexts and spoke the following words sincerely, as the king and the entire multitude of the Aryans were being praised: "All of you well know about the submission and labor shown to [g54] this court and to your realm by my ancestors, from the time we had been ranked in your service. Thus there is no need for me to acquaint you with the events one by one, since you know them better than I do. Despite the fact that I am much less than my ancestors, nonetheless, to the extent of my ability, I have resolved to satisfy you with upright labor. Wherever I have accomplished something at your order, your [94] military commanders and my comrades have seen the work and labor I have performed by my strength. Though what I have accomplished has not been worthy of renown or praise, hereafter with God's help, I will endeavor to do a deed with such strength and power that its fame will be related not only before you Aryans, but at the emperor's court, and among other people forever."

It was as though graced by God that Vardan, *sparapet* of Armenia and lord of the Mamikoneans, said these words which announced the championship of God for centuries until eternity. When the king of Iran and all the court nobility heard such thoughts being expressed, they were astonished, and thanked him, greatly praising him and expressing their satisfaction. For God concealed the promise which Vardan, *sparapet* of Armenia, pledged to achieve to acquire great renown, for which God bestowed upon him the reputation of a champion for eternity.

When all [the nobles] from the three lands of Armenia, Iberia, and Aghbania/Aghuania had said farewell, taking the divisions of the multitude of mages along, they returned to their lands. On the road they reaffirmed that same sworn oath made on the holy Gospel many times. Bidding one another farewell, each went to his own land in order to inform others in time, in accordance with God's permission, about [95] requirements for the deeds they planned to implement. However, the king of Iran, Yazkert, had not released the *bdeshx* of Iberia, Ashusha, and the two sons of Vasak, prince of Siwnik', Babik and Amirnerseh [The editors, p.55 n. 29, suggest an emendation to Atrnerseh] along with the other Armenian *naxarars*. [Yazkert] was suspicious and took this precaution because of the obscurity of earlier events.

29. The Armenian *tanuters* and the *sepuhs* with them reached the land of Armenia. Among them were those who were [spiritually] well and those who were ill, alive, but half-dead. Those who were not well could not see the radiant arrival [awaiting] those who travelled such a long journey yet were able to remain well. Divisions of Christ's clerics came before them, bringing along the symbol of the life-giving Cross and the relics of the blessed Gregory (who was like an Apostle), singing psalms which, thanks to the Holy Spirit, the prophet David had sung, and which they themselves [*i.e.*, the returning nobles] [g55] had at times sung, singing louder than the clerics with heavenly delight. But on this occasion one could hear the sounds of weeping [96] and moaning, cries of lament and shrieking. Anxious children fled terrified from their fathers' arms, frightened that a transformation had occurred, not considering [their fathers'] appearance to be the same as before. They quickly looked at their mothers' faces which were constantly grieving and streaming with

tears. As a result, the children also began to cry, and no one—*dayeak* or instructor—was able to quiet them [*och' ok' karer lrhec'uc'anel i dayekac'n kam i dastiarakac'n*]. When those who had apostasized, on pretexts and not in reality, saw this, they immediately wanted to draw swords and put them to work. They preferred immediate death to seeing such disasters and enduring them. As the psalm says, the supper of joy which they were eating turned into ashes and their drink was mixed with tears [Psalms 101, 10]. For no one wanted to sit at table with them, neither woman, child, *azat*, servant, or attendants [*och' azat, och' carhay ok' ew och' spasawork'*].

Then one could see how all of them split away and separated from each other. As the sweet and agreeable word of the true Savior Christ said: "There are other sheep that are not of this fold. They too must be brought here so that there shall be one flock, one shepherd [John 10, 16]." [97] Indeed God did unite [the sheep] and fulfilled what had been said, but they were unexpectedly attacked by the enemy, dispersed thoroughly and became as a flock lacking a shepherd. For all of these reasons there was mourning and sobbing by the senior *azats'* women and by widows in the squares, by young newly-married women and princesses in their locked halls and by nuptials in their chambers. The blessed bishops with the honorable priests and Church covenant, the old, the young, and the entire multitude of the people, cried out and wept in the house of God. And there were streams of blood caked on all the faces of the orthodox people.

Now the brigades of mages hurriedly compelled [people] to carry the fire into the temple of the Lord's holiness, to build *atrushans* in other renowned and attractive places, and to appoint bearers of wood for the insatiable fuel needs of the false-god. [The fire], which devoured [the wood] without rationality, gave no favor to those serving it, and when the bearers [of wood] took out the spent charcoal, their licentious faces were tormented with ashes.

[98] 30. Now when Vardan, lord of the Mamikoneans and the *sparapet* of Armenia, saw all of this wickedness he summoned his entire family, brothers, *azats*, servants and the entire multitude of his own court [g56], and began speaking to them as follows: "I did not apostasize my Creator and lord Jesus Christ either voluntarily or out of fear. God forbid. Nor did I repudiate the doctrine and faith of the holy Gospel which my honest grandfather, lord Sahak, taught and inculcated in me. Rather I erred for a moment, making pretexts until the present hour, for the salvation of all of you, so that being with you I might repent and live. For I have learned and remember the preaching of the holy prophets, that: 'I do not desire the death of the sinner, but his conversion and life' [Ecclesiastes 18, 23]; or as the Holy Spirit says in another passage: 'In returning and rest you shall be saved' [Isaiah 30, 15]. Now in exchange for having abandoned Him temporarily, for your sake, I would abandon totally all of these worldly goods. Should any of you find it possible to share my intention, despising all the futile possessions of the land, then together with you for the name of Christ, I will choose to go into exile."

When Vardan had said all of this to the family of his *tun* his venerable brother Hmayeak replied as follows: "Hurry and do as you planned, and do not delay, for no one can answer for himself for [99] even an hour. If we live, it is because of God. So let us not dread the day of our death, since no one can escape it, whether it comes sooner or later. Should we dwell in poverty or exile, only let us be succored by Him and let us take pride in His name every day. Let us only cast off from ourselves the name of apostasy and mix with the flock of Christ, and we will bear willingly all the sorrows which we encounter—hunger, the sword, or in exile, mendicity and death."

Thus in unison did they scorn all the futile splendor of this world, considering it as nothing. Rather, together with those of their court and family who agreed with them, they hurriedly decided to go to the areas of Byzantine authority where they could live together in hiding, or could disperse here and there. They arrived at a village named Aramanay located in the state [*nahang*] of Bagrawand, bordering Basen and Tuaracatap', where they wanted to rest for a few days and where they watchfully prepared to set off in haste.

Now suddenly Vasak, prince of Siwnik', who was the *marzpan* of Armenia at the time, and all of the *tanuters* and *sepuhs* of Armenia became informed about the plan and departure from the land of Armenia of Vardan, the great *sparapet* of Armenia and lord of the Mamikoneans, together with his brothers, court and entire equippage [g57]. They were [100] dismayed and frightened. All who were concerned with their personal salvation realized that they were completely lost and that it would be impossible to escape from the evil facing them. For all of them knew that without the leadership of that [Mamikonean] *azg*, no deed or work had been accomplished. Vasak, the prince of Siwnik', held counsel with all the *tanuters* of Armenia and the senior *sepuhs* and persuaded all of them to his belief, that: "We must immediately send select priests and senior *tanuters* of Armenia after Vardan Mamikonean, Armenia's general, to turn him back with their entreaties. For without him, all of our hopes and plans will come to naught."

Then Vasak, prince of Siwnik', wrote a letter, signed it with his seal-ring, and ordered all the senior *tanuters* of Armenia to write letters and to seal them with their rings. He also had the sealed Gospel of the covenant brought forth. Then Vasak, prince of Siwnik', selected the following men, entrusted them with all the letters and the Gospel on which the oath had been sworn, and sent them as emissaries after [Vardan]. Among the venerable priests were:

the presbyter Ghewond and  
the presbyter Eremia from Nor k'aghak' [Vagharshapat]  
the presbyter Xoren from Mren;

among the senior *tanuters* of Armenia were:

Arshawir, prince of Arsharunik'  
Hmayeak, prince of Dimak'sean, and  
Gazrik, prince of Abeghean.

They caught up with [Vardan] and those with him at the aforementioned village of Aramanay.

[101] Giving notice, they entered and related to the venerable Vardan, lord of the Mamikoneans and *sparapet* of Armenia, and to his brothers Hmayeak and Hamazasp, the reason for their speedy pursuit of him, the counsel, words and vow which had occurred among all the Armenians with the concurrence of prince Vasak of Siwnik'. They brought that Gospel of the covenant before the venerable Vardan and his brothers. They also presented him with the letters of Vasak, lord of Siwnik', and of the other Armenian *azats*, bishops and *sepuhs*, as well as with a summarized message of all of their words: "You, chief [*du awagik*], together with your brothers and believing family who have thought to save themselves with you, have escaped. But all of us will be ruined with eternal destruction. For without you neither we nor our sons shall ever find salvation and life. But as you have taken care to protect your own, do not abandon such a multitude of souls to be destroyed. For there are many of us who are of your blood and mingled with your *azg*. Let us, too, be crowned by Christ, just as you are striving that only your own folk be crowned."

Now when the blessed *sparapet* of Armenia and lord of the Mamikoneans, Vardan, and his venerable brothers heard all of these words from the delegation of priests [g58] and *naxarars* which had arrived, and when they saw the holy Gospel of the covenant, and read the letters of Vasak, prince of Siwnik', the *marzpan* of Armenia, and each of their comrades, [Vardan] replied with the sentiments shared by all of them: "My brothers, family and I consider it the most important thing in the world [102] that we choose and find salvation for our souls. We have learned and firmly hold to that unshakable belief that 'What does it benefit man if he gains the whole world but loses his soul; and what can a man give in place of his soul [Mark 8 36-37]?' We do not merely seek benefit for our own souls, but would rejoice in the salvation of others' as well. Nor is it that we are fleeing out of fear of the sword. Anyone familiar with our *azg* would know that this could never be the case. All of you Armenians accurately know from historical writings [*gitek' stugut'eamb i*

*patmut'ene groc'* ] and from listening to your seniors, that this *tohm* has always fought with its life more for the well-being of our comrades than for ourselves. However, recalling all of your treacherous duplicity which you always displayed toward our ancestors, we have departed to escape. As you have always placed us in straits and yet held yourselves aloof, it has been our *azg* alone which has faced great sorrows and death. But no one of our *azg* has stood opposed to the blessed and heavenly call of the Gospel, nor do we wish to. God forbid. You who stand behind it, as well as you who are of two minds must realize that the holy Gospel knows everyone and judges each one according to his deeds."

31. When the blessed Vardan, lord of the Mamikoneans and *sparapet* of Armenia, had said this, with the support of his venerable brothers and dear ones, the Mamikoneans returned to their comrades in the Armenian army. Having achieved unity, a multitude of them did not desist from the counsel of the blessed *sparapet* of Armenia, Vardan, [103] but celebrated [mass] with priests in their homes. Others celebrated mass with a host of clerics at his court. Many hastened there, day and night. [Vardan], sharing the sentiments of all the Armenians, longed to go to Church. But although he was bothered by not going, nonetheless he willingly abstained, enduring the situation for awhile concerning himself with the needs of his comrades, the needs of his House and himself. He was especially concerned about Ashusha, the Iberian *bdeshx*, and the sons of Vasak, the prince of Siwnik', whom the Iranian king, Yazkert, had kept at court. The holy Vardan regarded the situation not with a view to advancing his cause, for he was not thinking about achieving a reputation for victory. He longed to shed his own blood for the flourishing covenant of [g59] the Church. But as a virtuous person, he was aware that as a result of [untimely provocations, the hostages] might be subjected to wretched acts by the king, and be injured.

However Vahan, prince of the Amatunik', would not leave Vardan, the general of Armenia, alone. Rather, he was always urging that the condition of rebellion be made known, sometimes doing this urging himself, other times by means of other people. He made it appear that he was concerned only about the salvation of souls, though in fact, he was not much concerned with this. Although he spoke about quickly proclaiming [the rebellion], he was actually thinking about a previous grudge that he, Vahan, lord of Amatunik', and Vasak, prince of Siwnik' had against each other.

[104] According to his heavy calculations, he reasoned that either Vasak, prince of Siwnik', would not agree to rebel, and would [therefore] be killed by his own comrades, dying an unworthy death; or, if he agreed to rebel because of the danger, his two sons who were detained at court, might evilly be put to death, or else, after living through heavy fetters and long imprisonment, be mercilessly tortured. But that holy man of God, Vardan, lord of the Mamikoneans and the general of Armenia, did not put confidence in words, but rather, was concerned about his comrades, and wanted to display heroism. Thus did the springtime pass, until the heat of summer approached. When the warm months arrived, the entire multitude of Armenians went to the cool places, to the district of Caghkotn close to the secure stronghold which is called Anggh. They made these places their camping grounds and remained there during the hot weather.

32. Now when the mages (whom the Armenian *naxarars* had brought with them from court to be teachers) saw that they and their faith were despised, they hurried to secretly write to the court about the rebellion. For the *naxarars'* wives, whom the mages thought to instruct, were repulsed at their very sight. Furthermore, [the parents] constantly ordered the instructors [*dastiarakac'n*] of their sons and daughters not [105] to send them [to the mages]. The men who had pretended [conversion to Zoroastrianism], to let it appear that they had apostasized, did not allow these false *vardapets* to even eat bread in their presence, and as a result [the mages] circulated around hungry. They did not dare to flee outright, yet remaining there [they were] risking death and destruction.

Now when Vardan, the *sparapet* of Armenia, learned that the matter of the rebellion had been greatly noised about and that very great harm was being done by indifference, he held counsel for many days. He assembled

the honorable bishops, notable priests and senior *tanuters* of Armenia, and the *sepuhs*. But to that time they did not want to reveal their words to Vasak, Armenia's *marzpan*. They realized that it was not only [a question of] the man's sons which had halted his turn to salvation, but his very intentions, those of a [g60] glory-loving denier of God. The venerable Vardan then said openly to all of them: "How long shall we countenance hiding the truth and suffering ruin? News [of the intended rebellion], has spread about everywhere. Rather, let us go about in the full light of day, and be known as the sons of light."

Now a certain individual named Zandaghan from the Ostan house, a putrid seed, who had done numerous unrepentant wicked things in his lifetime, heard from some people what the Armenians were planning. He immediately went and informed Vasak, whom he resembled. When the [106] senior *naxarars* of Armenia were informed of his treacherous words they denounced him, seized him in the village called Arcak, took and bound him at yet another village named Berdkunk' in the same district of Bagrewand. Not many days later they slayed him by lapidation, [a deed ] befitting his impious acts.

Then all the Armenian *tanuters*, *sepuhs*, bishops, the entire multitude of priests and laity openly and unitedly assembled by the venerable *sparapet* of Armenia, Vardan, lord of the Mamikoneans. All of them, in accordance with the Biblical injunction, hurried with Vardan to see Vasak, prince of Siwnik', the *marzpan* of Armenia. They revealed their unanimous counsel to him. Although [Vasak] tried to dissuade them, first because of his sons who were [hostages] at court; and secondly because his entire life was always inclined toward evil concerns, nonetheless [the rebels] did not permit his thoughts to wander to and fro. And, although he did not want it, despite this, he was forced to agree to unite with them. Then the *naxarars* of Armenia commanded the holy bishops and priests to bring forth the Gospel of their blessed covenant. The entire multitude of *azat* and non-*azat* troops, with Vasak, prince of Siwnik', and all the *tanuters* and *sepuhs* swore [on the Gospel] and reconfirmed their oath. Those who had not sealed the oath with their rings previously, did so then. Then all of them, men and women united, the entire multitude, lifted their hands to Heaven and cried out in joy:

"We confess our belief in You, holy Father, creator of Heaven and earth, of the visible and invisible, and in Your Only-Begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and in the life-giving Holy Spirit and in the unity of the inseparable and indivisible Trinity. You are [107] the sole God and there is none but You. Because of Your love of humankind, for the salvation of the world, in the last days, You bore one of the holy Trinity through the blessed virgin Mary and enduring all torments with Your body which You created from a holy and divine virgin, You were taken and affixed to a wooden cross. By shedding Your holy blood You freed the world from serving accursed [g61] sins. You died, were buried, arose, and went to Heaven. You gave a joyous promise that all who confessed You as the true God, king of kings, and lord of lords would be taken to You. And we testify to and confess You as God of gods, lord of lords, God the atoner of our sins—we who have apostasized and regretted it, we who are guilty, and sought your mercy, we who have fallen and [now] stand erect. Accept us as the apostate son who sold and soiled the garment of holy baptism with which you clothed us when we washed in the baptismal font—[as people], who with dissolute impiety have fallen into the mud of apostasy, like a herd of pigs.

"And now, again, we beseech Your true heavenly Father, saying 'We have sinned against Heaven and against You.' Grant us forgiveness for our sins through the intercession of the illuminator Apostles and the labors of the blessed champion Gregory who resembled [the Apostles] and was their coworker. Clothe us in our former robe, clear our feet of the impediments of evil with which the enemy has pierced us and made us lame. Put on our feet shoes of preservation, [108] of the holy Gospel. Place on the finger of our right hands the ring engraved with Your Cross, by which all of our limbs are sealed and which causes Satan to flee from us in terror. Just as You shed Your holy blood for sinners, to save the guilty, grant that we may shed our blood for this confession and for the

pardon of each of our sins. And should anyone stray from the oath of this covenant, may he be seen as an oath-breaker, and having quit our alliance, may he go outside with Judas, who was spurned and expelled from the band of holy Apostles, and may he stand on the left, without any pardon. And may a frightful roar be heard from You on the day of requiting, saying: 'Go from me, ye accursed, into the eternal fire which is readied for satan and his satellites.'"

When the entire united multitude of men and women recited this complete confession of blessing and curses in a loud voice, the whole land shook from the cry of the troops of the multitude. All the words of faith of the covenant were written down and sealed, first with the ring of Vasak, prince of Siwnik', and then with the rings of all the *tanuters* of Armenia and the senior *sepuhs*. Taking an oath on the holy Gospel, they gave it to the venerable bishops and [members of] the senior priesthood who were present. Doing all this as described, with great delight and singing spiritual songs, they went to the house of the Lord where they worshipped the one and only true God. Full of emotion and with long, tireless genuflections [109] they prayed.

When they were finished praying, the multitude of *rhamik* troops headed to the fire-temple, not awaiting the command of [their] seniors. Taking the receptacle of the fire, they extinguished it with water. According [g62] to the false *vardapets* of the Iranians, fire and water are brothers; but the embrace was more inimical than brotherly. They ordered that the multitude of mages should be carefully held for a day. The next day, at sunrise, in the village called Zarehawan, [the rebels] put some of them to the sword.

33. When all this had been done in the order I have described, [the Armenian rebels] remained there for the hot weather season. Then they hastened to descend to the district of Ayrarat, for they had heard that Mihrnerseh, the *hazarapet* of the Aryans, had arrived at the city of P'aytakaran where he formed a brigade and dispatched it to Armenia via Aghbania/Aghuania. The Aghbanian *azats* who shared the covenant with the Armenians had to quickly rush to them and then back to Aghbania/Aghuania to fight [the Iranians] in battle.

When [the Armenians] had come to the district of Ayrarat and heard this news from the region of Aghbania/Aghuania, Vasak, the prince of Siwnik', compelled the venerable *sparapet* of Armenia, Vardan, lord of the Mamikoneans, to go and engage them with a brigade. On pretexts [110] [Vasak] himself managed to stay where he was. He said: "I will remain ready here. Perhaps the malicious Mihrnerseh has something else in mind to inflict on us." Now Vasak was creating a path of deceit in his heart, and had as associates other God-betraying men who shared his beliefs, from the *azats* of Armenia. But the venerable *sparapet* of Armenia and lord of the Mamikoneans, Vardan, said to Vasak, the prince of Siwnik': "Let us now do as we planned to, and dispatch to the emperor those men we want to send. After that, I will do as you command, without delay." In order to quickly achieve his ends, [Vasak] agreed to implement the words of Vardan, the venerable *sparapet* of Armenia.

Then immediately, letters were written to the emperor, to all the nobility at the Byzantine court, to other princes and lieutenants, to the *bdeshx* of Aghjnik', and to the prince of Angegh *tun*, to Cop'k', Hashtean'k', Ekegheac', and other princes of every place, as well as to the great *sparapet* of Antioch. All of this correspondence was sealed first by the ring of Vasak, prince of Siwnik', followed by [the seals of] all the *tanuters* of Armenia. [The group] readied to travel to Byzantium consisted of Vahan, the prince of the *tun* of Amatunik', a learned and sagacious man, the blessed *sepuh* Hmayeak, brother of the venerable general of Armenia, Vardan, from the Mamikonean *tohm*, and the venerable Merhuzhan, brother of the blessed Aghan, from the Arcrunik' *tohm*. The correspondence was entrusted to them by Vasak, prince of Siwnik', and all the *naxarars* of the land of Armenia. They travelled to the emperor and all the nobility of Armenia mentioned above [g63].

[111] 34. The venerable Vardan, the *sparapet* of Armenia and the lord of the Mamikoneans, took along with him the following *tanuters* of Armenia who hastened to meet the hour of martyrdom with fervent love:

Xorhen Xorxorhuni,  
Arshawir Kamsarakan,  
T'at'ul Dimak'sean,  
Artak Paluni,  
Giwat Vahewuni,  
Hmayeak Dimak'sean,

as well as other *tanuters* and *sepuhs* and many of the troops of Armenia (who willingly and quickly wanted to avenge the covenant of the holy Church, and give their lives for the blessed and correct belief in Christ), and other brigades from the troops of the Mardpetakan cavalry, who were eager for a war of virtue. [These were people] whom Vasak, the malicious prince of Siwnik', recognized as not sharing his own intentions, and so organized them and sent them along with [Vardan]. But many of the most prominent *tanuters* of Armenia and the *sepuhs*, as well as [people] from the *rhamik* multitude [112] in whom he recognized evil tendencies, and who were not directly [participants] in the plan of the sworn alliance, [Vasak] kept there with him.

Then the venerable general of Armenia, Vardan, lord of the Mamikoneans, together with his comrades and the other force of men with him, said farewell to Vasak, the prince of Siwnik', and to the remaining nobles with him, and went to battle in sincerity. [Vardan] entered a holy church, the house of the Lord, and worshipped the omnipotent lord God. [He] took the holy Gospel and the symbol of the envivifying Cross, and saluted them, insatiably placing them over his eyes and forehead. All of the people who were with him did the same thing with fervent love. Inspired with love, they all departed. Now the venerable *sparapet* of Armenia, Vardan, had not passed many lodging-places in [the district of] Ayrarat when Vasak, the prince of Siwnik', quickly sent secret emissaries to Mihrnerseh, the *hazarapet* of the Aryans, informing him in a letter of his treacherous plan. He also wrote to Nixorakan Sebuxt and to other seniors whom Mihrnerseh had sent against Armenia—and to Vehshapuh whom he had made [113] his loyal overseer (who was then the royal chamberlain, but subsequently became head of the Aryan *dibheran*). Vasak, the duplicitous prince of Siwnik', wrote to demonstrate his treacherous will to them: "Be at ease regarding Vardan's advance upon you, and have no fear. For there are many [warriors] whom I have kept here with me, and I have dispersed many others here and there. Their numbers are not many, but few." But this impious one did not remember the fact that the hearts of princes rest in God's hands [g64]. For, as will be shown, the malicious [Vasak] who hoped by his actions to gain favor from [the Iranians], had even more roused the power of God's anger and [God] turned [the Iranians] against him. And at the final moment [Vasak's actions] collapsed on his own head.

35. When the venerable general of Armenia, Vardan, lord of the Mamikoneans, reached Aghbania/Aghuania, the Iranian military commanders were informed about the arrival of the Armenians. Upon hearing the news, [the Iranians] quickly crossed the great river, called the Kur, and advanced before them as far as the village named Xaghxagh in the country of Aghbania/Aghuania. The blessed *sparapet* of Armenia, Vardan, saw the limitless multitude [114] of the Iranian brigade, and then saw how very few his own men were. He began to speak with [his men], joyously encouraging them in Christ and recalling for them the words of the holy Spirit which were sung by the prophet Samuel's mother: "'Let the mighty boast not of their might; nor the great one in his greatness, but let them glory in God [I Kings, 2.9; see also Jeremiah 9, 23-24, I Corinthians, I, 31, etc.].'" For the matter of victory and defeat rests not in having few or many [soldiers] but with God's will." When the venerable general of Armenia, Vardan, lord of the Mamikoneans, had said this he looked to see the will of his comrades and of all in the brigade with them. [When he saw] how much they had been strengthened and encouraged by fervent love, he joyfully glorified the lord Jesus Christ, the Savior of all.

Before the battle began, [the Armenians] had observed the formation of the Iranian brigades. The venerable general of Armenia, Vardan, arranged his own brigade with competent cavalry, opposite them. He divided [the brigade] into three fronts, entrusting each [front] to a military commander. As military commander of the right front, he appointed the prince of Arsharunik', Arshawir Kamsarakan (who was also the son-in-law of the



blessed Vardan, general of [115] Armenia and lord of the Mamikoneans, being married to his daughter). As a comrade-in-arms [Vardan] gave [Arshawir] the senior *sepuh*, Mush, from the Dimak'sean *azg*. [Vardan] entrusted the left front to Xorhen Xorxorhuni and appointed Hmayeak Dimak'sean to support him. Vardan, the blessed general of Armenia, prepared to lead the central front in the attack. With the fronts thus deployed, and depending on God's care, they attacked the enemy.

Arshawir Kamsarakan and Mush, the Dimak'sean *sepuh*, were the first to reach the site of the battle. However, through unfamiliarity with the place, they fell into an extremely thick marsh. Because of the great rushing of their horses, Arshawir Kamsarakan and Mush fell into the mud together with the horses, and began to sink. The venerable Dimak'sean *sepuh*, Mush, was martyred there by Nixorakan. But as for [g65] Arshawir Kamsarakan, he got down from his horse which was in deep mud, and on foot he slew Vurk, brother of the the Lp'nac' king. One of [Arshawir's] boots had come off his foot and was in the marsh. Then Kamsarakan, with only one boot on, and covered with mud, together with all [his] troops, removed the horse. Fearlessly, boldly, like a bird he mounted the horse, and put to flight the terrified enemies [116] who were around him. Looking around, [Arshawir] saw the venerable *sparapet* of Armenia, the lord of the Mamikoneans, Vardan, with his comrades and all of the Armenian brigade. They also were chasing a multitude of Iranian troops before them, as fugitives. Some [of the Iranians] fell to the ground, killed by the sword, while others fell into the river and drowned. Others yet scattered into the fields and dense forests.

Now some of the Iranian nobiity had gotten into boats and were hurrying to flee to the other shore of the great [Kur] river. But the venerable general of Armenia, Vardan, urgently urged Arshawir Kamsarakan, prince of Arsharunik', to shoot arrows after the fleeing boats, since [Vardan] was confident of [Arshawir's] firm and unswerving aim. Arshawir the Kamsarakan (as he always implemented the words of the blessed general) immediately accepted the command from him, and began shooting at the navigators and the fugitives. He mortally wounded the navigators and many other people on board. As the wounded fell, the ships were destroyed. Many of the navigators and the principal Iranians drowned in the river. So, aid from On High favored them wltv victory, and [Vardan's men] returned to their camps thanking and blessing God.

[Vardan's troops] remained there that day, and the next day crossed the great Kur River. They reached a guard wall, located between the principality of Aghbania/Aghuania and the Huns/ Honk'. There they found sentry guards and many other Iranian troops, which they put to the sword. Then they entrusted the pass to a royal Aghbanian/Aghuan named Vahan and sent this same man as an emissary to the Huns and to other strongholds to convince them to ally with them by sending a brigade, [These peoples] willingly and enthusiastically agreed to help, and confirmed it with an oath.

36. With God's aid, as all of this was occurring as they wanted, suddenly an emissary reached the venerable general of Armenia, Vardan, and the entire brigade with him. He gave them gloomy and wicked news: "The impious Vasak has betrayed the covenant of God and duplicitously broken the oath on the Gospel. He has rebelled from the alliance of [g66] truth. The Armenian nobles who are with him have also rebelled and, turning their faces from the path of justice, they have erred after Satan. They sent an emissary to Iran and made vows to them in letters. They took the fortified strongholds of Armenia, placed their [118] fortress-commanders in them and told them to keep watch. [Vasak] had the children of the Mamikonean *tohm*, of the Kamsarakans, and of other *tanuters* gathered from each of [their] *dayeaks* and taken to secure fortresses in the principality of Siwnik', which he ordered carefully held. Furthermore, the treacherous Vasak had the boys sent to the Iranian king. The following people abandoned themselves to Satan with the oath-breaking Vasak:

the prince of the Bagratunik', Tiroc',  
the prince of Xorxorhunik', Gadishoy,  
the prince of Apahunik', Manech,  
the prince of Vahewunik', Giwt,

the prince of Palunik', Varazshapuh,  
the prince of Abeleank', Arten,  
the prince of Urc, Nerseh,

and other nobles [*ew aylk' yostankac* "and others from the *ostaniks*"] and some *sepuhs* from every *tohm*.

Hearing about all of these disastrous deeds wrought by the duplicitous prince of Siwnik', Vasak, and by the other *naxarars* with him, the venerable *sparapet* of Armenia, Vardan, lord of the Mamikoneans, and the troops with him could not but [119] be dismayed. They vowed to do everything possible to preserve themselves and their captive boys, saying: "Lo, the Savior of all, Christ, has taken the hay rake in hand and is winnowing and grading the grain placing it in the heavenly grainary, but throwing the straw to the merciless burning of inextinguishable fires. Let us be like the cleaned grain, and let us await the day of our martyrdom with desire. Should we be worthy of attaining the fate of the saints, our good deaths will crown us. [Should we live], our boys will be preserved and grow up each in his own place and attain princehood, while the satellites of Satan with great remorse will be shamed and ridiculed in this world and in the next."

After the blessed people had said this, they all went together to the land of Aghbania/Aghuania from the district of Ayrarat in the country of Armenia. There, in accordance with their custom, they remained and passed the bitterly cold days of winter, all of them anxiously waiting for springtime and the day when they would attain the crown of martyrdom. For no one thought of victory or defeat, rather, like a thirsty person they longed for the cup of their final salvation and wanted to drink.

[120] Now Vasak, the treacherous prince of Siwnik', did not stop writing letters to the princes, *shinakans*, and priests of the land of Armenia. He [tried to] show that the oaths and testimonies brought from court were false and futile, saying: "The king of kings has sanctioned Christianity [g67] for [this] land, and does not seek a harmful destruction of the mages." About the rebellion, he said: "I shall completely forget about [recriminations], only let people turn from the counsel and word of Vardan, and not be lost with him." Regarding himself, the oath-breaking Vasak wrote: "I will be the intermediary in all of this and keep the land of Armenia unharmed." Then the duplicitous Vasak entrusted the correspondence to some false priests—non-priests—having the following names:

a certain Zangak,  
Sahak Jaynogh,  
and another one, a certain Petros Erkat'i.

Sahak and Petros were from the district of Siwnik'. The treacherous Vasak entrusted the correspondence about the venerable *sparapet* Vardan to these men and had them circulate it throughout the land of Armenia. Those people who were weakening in the faith and were without hope, listened to the words of the treacherous man, and believed them. [121] But when the crazed words were heard by those who held firm, and those who longed for martyrdom, they became strengthened, and even more convinced, and they hopefully awaited the day which would bring them the good news of their salvation.

37. When the bitter days of winter were passed and the great feast of Easter arrived, the oath-keepers and the entire world—angels and men—experienced joy. For there were engagenents of peace among them at the good news of the Savior's resurrection, and with joyful happiness, they celebrated this.

After a few days had passed, they heard that many troops had come to the districts of Her and Zarewand. The venerable *sparapet* of Armenia, Vardan, lord of the Mamikoneans, sent the following message to the oath-keepers who had gone to their own homes to celebrate the Easter holiday with their families: "Many brigades [of Iranians] have arrived, bringing along divine crowns for the lovers of God. Now let whoever wants to participate make haste so that he does not miss out and regret it. Should anyone have other plans, as do those

who abandoned themselves to Satan, let him stay and relax wherever it pleases him. For none will be crowned with his comrades, if he does not suffer. Let each one range himself now, with the mortals, or with the immortals."

[122] Those who loved truth, and longed for immortality were moved, and urged each other on, resembling a flock which hurries after the shepherd's call. It seems to me that Abraham did not go as quickly bearing a calf to the angels who had promised him a son, as the Armenian troops hastened after the venerable Vardan, *sparapet* of Armenia. They were going to Christ's supper, to eat the bread of the angels.

Thus they resembled the blessed Apostles, all of one heart and of one soul. The venerable *sparapet* of Armenia [g68], Vardan, sent a *sepuh* named Arhanjar of the Amatunik' *azg* together with the nobility with him—some 300 cavalry—to go and spy on the multitude of Iranian troops and to harass them, so that if possible, Vardan said, they might quickly come and bring us our crowns of the Kingdom which the Savior Christ, the giver of eternal goodness, will bestow upon us through them. Arhanjar and the brigade with him departed and was so favored by God that they saw the Iranian army and fell on one wing of the mighty rear-guard, putting many to the sword, and sending others fleeing back to the Iranian army. [The Armenian troops] returned unharmed in joy to the Armenian brigade and spoke of God's strength which the Savior had aided them with.

[123] When the venerable *sparapet* Vardan and the masses of the troops heard the news, they glorified and blessed omnipotent God, [Arhanjar's men] also said that the military commanders were the Mushkan Niwsalawurt and Doghvch, and that [the Iranians] were [trying] to come into the center of the land quickly. When the venerable *sparapet* of Armenia and those with him heard this, they strived yet more to go against them. First, they wanted to quickly meet with the hour of their martyrdom (since they had been incessantly praying day and night that they be worthy to have this share of the divine); second, they said, if warfare does not take place in the districts of Her and Zarewand, and if no one stops the Iranian army, they will come into the land of Armenia bringing death, taking captives, and causing harm. Thinking these things, [the Armenian army] wanted to hurry, but before that, the Iranian brigade came more quickly [than expected] to the district of Artaz, close to the village called Awarayr. They came to an enclosed place in the Tghmut plain which was chosen out of fear of the Armenian troops. Considering it a proper refuge for themselves, they pitched camp in its midst.

[124] 38. Now on Friday of the great feast of Pentecost, the Armenian troops arrived near the same site and found the Iranian troops unprepared. Had they wanted, they could have inflicted unusually great harm [on the Iranians] who were like a flock that had lazily dispersed. But they permitted them to rest that day. For those who longed and yearned for martyrdom did not want to see it sullied by a soul-losing pollution; rather, at a moment's call, they hastened to attain that longed-for martyrdom [? *k'anzi och' er edeal i mit hanatakut'ean p'ap'ak'oghac'` aynuhetew yaght'el, vasn tesaneloy hanapazor zhogewkorusac'n zapakanumn*].

Then [the Armenians] gathered and encamped near the Iranian troops. The day drew to a close. Evening approached, and as usual they held worship and were filled with prayers [g69]. They modestly rejoiced in their food. Having done all of this they accepted a command of the holy priests to say the evening prayers with wakeful entreaties. Until morning all the ranks of priests encouraged the multitude of troops (sometimes with laments from the psalm-book, sometimes with words of doctrine) to take heart for a moment, and then to inherit inexhaustible goodness. The holy priest Yovsep', who held the throne of the *kat'oghikosate* of Armenia, commanded [125] Ghewond, that venerable man of God, to advise and encourage the people. The holy priest Ghewond fortified and taught everyone the entire night through with tireless Apostolic doctrine, and copious wisdom, with interpretations of the proverbs and illuminating doctrine. The words which flowed like sweet honey from the mouth of this just man brought delight to the listeners. A luminous clarity revealed itself in him by heavenly influence, and he appeared to have the face of an angel. (At an earlier time [in his

life] his *vardapet* the man of God, Mashtoc', had chanced upon [Ghewond] while the blessed man was sleeping. Together with others of his students, the venerable Koriwn and Arjan, [Mashtoc'] saw in waking how a brilliant light radiated forth around him. Then and there, through the holy Spirit, these venerable men realized that the blessed man [Ghewond] would die a martyr's death. Although they did not reveal this miraculous occurrence to him, nonetheless word of this vision spread about through many rumours.) [Ghewond] recalled for all who depended on him many spiritual things, [such as] the lives and forbearance of earlier people. [He spoke] first of the dishonoring and patience of saint Gregory, and then about all the others. He said: "Those who [126] experience a premature and slow death, have chosen eternal life. Some people were unknowingly worthy of receiving the Good News—people who [experienced] torments and death, some keeping fasts, on pallets, others because of their love for the poor and for strangers. Others were chosen by God for their judicious judgements and for making the country bloom. But the fate of a martyr is not shared by all, rather it is given from time to time by heavenly Providence. Those who receive it should purchase through just business the eternal rather than the transitory, eternal goodness rather than pollution. And now those of us who have been kept for the great and honorable Cup will hasten to be worthy of attaining a portion of the inheritance of the luminous saints. The psalmist sang of their respectability: 'The death of His saints before the Lord is respectable [Psalm 125, 15].' Behold the ascetic Gregory, your *vardapet* calls you to the heavenly city of Jerusalem, to the most desired and fragrant supper of Christ, where pain and sorrow and lamentations do not exist" [g70].

The blessed Ghewond encouraged each member of the grandee nobility of Armenia with many other words of spiritual [127] and inspired doctrine. He was aided by the venerable Yovsep', who, although ordained as a presbyter, nonetheless had the fortune to be worthy of the *kat'olikosal* throne [or *t'epet ew zjerhnadrut'iwn eric'ut'ean uner` sakayn yat'orh kat'oghikosut'ean er vichakeal arzhanaworapes*]. They counseled and fortified them with spiritual words all night, until each of the willing listeners became, as it were, armed with fearless strength by the holy Spirit. These were people to whom the decreed hours of the night seemed longer than on other nights, and they longed to see the dawn of salvation, to be able to drink the Cup of the Kingdom of Heaven.

When the venerable Vardan, lord of the Mamikoneans, heard the divinely-inspired words and the doctrine exhorting martyrdom from the angelic lord Yovsep' and the diligent Ghewond, he replied: "The dignity of ordination of blessed priests of the Church comes not from mankind, but is bestowed by the holy Spirit. Their words cause all rational listeners to look toward Heaven, just as this very night long they have been ceaselessly urging everyone to the Heavenly banquet, recalling for us the torments of saint Gregory. Many here are not only [Gregory's] pupils, but are blood-relations [*yoroc' bazumk' or ast kamk', och' miayn ashakertk', ayl azgaxarhnut'eamb emk' haghordealk'*]. Let us hasten to the wedding of Christ, to join the guests, [128] the brigade of holy Apostles, in Christ's dining hall where [Christ] has opened the door of the Kingdom and waits to receive everyone and make them happy with an eternal, endless and immortal happiness. Let us make haste without delay. And let none resemble Judas who was torn from the ranks of the Apostles. As you have seen tonight, those who weaken trail after Satan. But I will take that cup which I have long desired and drink of it with eagerness, crying out the Biblical prescription: 'I take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord [Psalm 125, 13].'"

After the blessed general had said all of this, at cock's crow the holy Yovsep' and Ghewond commanded all the priests to perform mass, so that armed with the holy Spirit [the troops] would be accompanied to God's beautiful Paradise. After the Armenian troops had communed in the body and blood [of Christ], they hastened to work on this divine matter before them.

39. It was close to the hour of sunrise, and the Iranian brigade was arming and preparing to form into military fronts. The blessed Vardan, lord of the Mamikoneans, divided his [129] brigade into three fronts. As head of the center wing he appointed the lord of Arcrunik' and the *mardpet* Mihrshapuh together with the prince of

Arsharunik', Arshawir, and the [g71] venerable men of Artak, prince of Mekk', and other senior *naxarars*. As chief of the right wing he appointed the venerable Maxaz Xoren, with the venerable T'at'ul, lord of Vanand, the blessed Nerseh K'ajberunik', and other senior *naxarars*. He readied the left wing himself, with his own brigade and with the prince of Arhawegheank', P'ap'ag, and other princely *naxarars* of Armenia, for it was on that side that the encampment of the brigade of Siwnik' troops, and the banners of other military men could be most clearly discerned. He left his own brother, Hamazaspean, as the rear guard and ordered him not to force anyone [to fight], but rather only to exhort them with words, for their own salvation.

Thus once the blessed Vardan had divided the Armenian troops into three fronts, and they were blessed by the holy priests, the two sides, Armenian and Iranian, attacked each other, the Armenians blessing God as they attacked. Vying with one another, those who sought the crown of [130] martyrdom advanced and turned the first Iranian troops to flight. But another multitude of Armenian troops, which had come under obligation and not voluntarily, though they had strived for goodness, nonetheless wavered and turned back, and suffered eternal loss in their flight. When the Iranian troops saw how the Armenian brigade was abandoned and fatigued from killing their own people, and how they were fleeing, they went into their midst and surrounded them like a sea. Those [Armenians] who had been hoping to achieve [martyrdom] attained it there. But then the Iranian troops quickly went after the Armenian fugitives. They killed some of those [Armenians] whom they caught up with; others they restricted in some secure place (but some [of the fugitives] at night attacked and killed many of the armed guards, and got away unharmed). In the morning [the Iranians] took the arrested fugitive Armenians to camp. Some they put to the sword, many others they trampled under elephants. The remainder of the fugitives were dispersed to one or another place in the land of Armenia.

Those who were worthy of the blessed, heavenly summons and were martyred there with the holy Vardan were as follows:

[131] from the Xorxorhunik' *azg*, the blessed Xoren,  
from the Palunik' *azg*, the blessed *sepuh* Artak,  
from the Gndunik' *azg*, the blessed Tachat,  
from the Dimak'sean *azg*, the blessed Hmayeak,  
from the K'ajberunik' *azg*, the blessed Nerseh,  
from the Gnunik' *azg*, the blessed Vahan,  
from the Encaynik' *azg*, the blessed Arsen,  
and from the Sruanjteayk' *azg*, the blessed Garegin.

As we discovered through much investigation and inquiry, the number of those martyred with the senior *naxarars* at the site [g72] of the battle was 276. Those who had been brought down from strongholds and killed with the sword or trampled by elephants added up to 750 men. Thus 1036 men died. Christ the requiter keeps all of these names written in the Book of Life. As for the Iranian casualties, the figure 3,544 was related to us as accurate by people who had learned it from the Iranian military commanders.

40. When the battle had come to this conclusion, and humane God had called his dear ones to Him, Mushkan Niwsalawurt sent a *hrovartak* to Yazkert, king of the Aryans, informing him of the outcome of the war, the glad tidings of victory, and an accounting by name of those [prominent] people who had fallen in battle on both sides. When king Yazkert heard [132] about the deaths of good men from the Iranian brigade, and about the death of Vardan, he fell into an awesome mourning, remembering the man's bravery and goodness which he had demonstrated many times defending the Aryan world against enemies. [Yazkert] ordered that as a reply to the *hrovartak* Mushkan Niwsalawurt together with the brigade should be summoned to court. He ordered that a certain man named Atrormizd, from the land of Armenia, be left there as *marzpan*. He urged him by *hrovartak* not to agitate the Armenian people but rather to subdue them with affection, and to permit everyone to practise Christianity freely. When Mushkan saw the *hrovartak* of king Yazkert and heard its

contents, he established Atrormizd Arsakan as *marzpan* in Armenia, and entrusted him with implementing everything written in the king's *hrovartak*. Mushkan and the nobility and the entire brigade returned to the country of Iran. Atrormizd, the *marzpan* of Armenia, who remained there sent many letters of peace to the different places of the land of Armenia, saying: "Come and build courageously, and fear nothing." He wrote and sealed this good news granting all of them whatever form of Christianity they wanted. At this news, all the people of Iran and Siwnik' assembled joyfully.

[133] 41. This was in addition to those who had assembled near the venerable Hmayeak in the strongholds of Tayk', where the latter organized a brigade from the select multitude of Iran and Siwnik'. He divided the brigade into two parts, appointing Arten Gabeghean and Varazshapuh Paluni as their military commanders. For a multitude of the fugitive Armenians—*naxarars* and *sepuhs*, *ostaniks* and *rhamiks*—had headed for the country of Tayk' and had assembled near Hmayeak, brother of the blessed general Vardan. Hmayeak had been delayed in the land of Byzantium, requesting troops from the emperor, as was mentioned earlier. Those travelling [g73] with him went before the emperor Theodosius [II, 408-450]. [The emperor] heard the reason for their arrival, and then listened to it again from them, affectionately. He agreed to aid them with a brigade. But while this holy man was preparing to fulfill his promise, his end overtook him and he passed from this life. He was succeeded by Marcian [450-457], who, when informed about what was needed for matters in Armenia, asked the seniors at court: "What reply do you think we should give to the men who have come to us from Armenia?" [Two individuals], Anatolis (who was then the *sparapet* of Antioch) and a certain P'ghorent (a man of Syrian nationality, who was chief of the emperor's court) [134] replied, saying: "It is not agreeable to us to scorn the covenant and stability which has for a long time existed among previous kings, a covenant both written and sealed, and to aggravate a peaceful situation with warfare, and to remove a land from the service of its king. Furthermore, we must think about what might happen, something no one knows for sure. Would such a [proposed] war be resolved easily or with extreme confusion?" With these words, they changed the emperor's mind, and the hopes of the Armenians [which the delegation] was concerned with and [the reason that it remained there, were injured and not realized. While the matter of the [Byzantine] response was being delayed thus, the war between the Armenians and the Iranians had begun.

When the Armenian *tanuters* and *naxarars* who had gone to the land of Byzantium saw that they had not been able to accomplish anything that they had been working for, they returned and made haste so that perhaps they would not lose out in the hope of salvation, but be found worthy to drink the cup of martyrdom with their comrades. But they did not [135] arrive in time for the battle. For the moment, they found an extremely secure place and stayed there, by the mountain called Parxar, close to the borders of Xaghteaç', to prepare as they could for whatever happened next. At the break of dawn, prepared, armed [Iranians] informed [about the Armenians' whereabouts] through guides, fell upon Hmayeak Mamikonean and his companions in the village named Orjnahagh in the district of Tayk'. At the time they were coming down from the strongholds of Parxar mountain. [Iranians] with the speed of fugitives caught up with each one's horse. Iranian troops struck at some unarmed and some armed. Turning about, [the Iranians] made them flee. Many were killed there in the town, others, in the vineyard. It was there that the blessed *sepuh* Hmayeak received the crown of perfection, which he had greatly longed and sought for. His request to follow after his holy brother was quickly heard. For God heard the man's request and granted it, and crowned him a saint.

Now when the oath-keepers who had gathered by the holy Hmayeak saw what had happened, they were overcome with great [g74] mourning, having no hope of consolation. For each man saw [136] before him the verdict of an evil death and ruin, as though carried out. Terrified, they retreated back up the Parxar mountain, considering it an expedient of sorts against the wicked despair that resulted from the great and terrible mourning [? *zarhurealk' anden i ver i learhn darhnayin i Parxar, hayt'ayt'ans imn arh ch'ari ew sug patcharhanac' meci ew ahawor haseloy trtmutean hashuein*]. When Atrormizd, the *marzpan* of Armenia, heard that so many fine men from the brigade of Iranians and Siwnec'ik' had been lost, although he was upset

by great sadness, nonetheless, when he heard about the deaths of blessed Vardan and Hmayeak, he was greatly comforted, knowing that the brave generals had been finally eliminated.

42. [The Iranians] then took counsel to devise a means of hunting the fugitives without using Aryans to fight, to hold them as they wanted, and to put the land of Armenia into tribute-paying status. They decided that they could sway the minds of the folk without warfare only by false oaths and worthless promises. The *marzpan* Atrormizd sent [to the rebels] in the name of king Yazkert and falsely swore that none of them would be killed and that no one's *terut'iwn* or *patiw* would be taken away. Thus did he deceitfully subdue them. He seized them all and sent the following men to the [137] court of king Yazkert:

the great prince of Arcrunik', Nershapuh,  
the prince of the *tun* of Amatunik',  
the prince of the *tun* of Vanand,  
the prince of the *tun* of Arsharunik', Arshawir,  
the prince of the *tun* of Anjewac'ik', Shmawon,  
the prince of the *tun* of Amatunik', Vahan,  
the prince of the Gnt'unik',  
the prince of Ashoc'k',  
the prince of the Arhawegheank', P'ap'ak,  
the prince of Tashir, Vren,  
the prince of Arcunik', Aprusam,  
and other *tanuters* and senior *sepuhs*.

Vasak, the duplicitous prince of Siwnik', also wanted to go to court, but he sent the others before he went.

The following were among the blessed priests of Armenia who had been seized earlier and placed in different secure fortresses in Siwnik':

the holy priest Yovsep' who then occupied the throne of the *kat'oghikosate*  
lord Ghewond,  
lord Samuel and lord Abraham, the priests of Arac  
[138] Also among those seized and taken were:

the blessed bishop of Erhshtunik', lord Sahak,  
the court priest of Nershapuh, prince of Arcrunik', lord Mushe,  
the holy priest Arshen  
and the blessed deacon K'ajaj.

Because of a grudge of the prince of Siwnik', the blessed bishop of Basen, lord T'at'ik had earlier been given to the Iranian military commanders to be taken to Xuzhastan, and he was kept there in harsh fetters. [Vasak] also sent [to court] the boys whom he had seized from *tohms* of the Mamikoneans [g75], Kamsarakans, and other princes of Armenia. [Vasak] thought to render a very great service to king Yazkert and to the entire Aryan world, and to receive honor of the realm and gifts. But God saw to it that he was yet more disgraced by his enemies on the day when Yazkert with all the court nobility ridiculed and dishonored him thanks to the unseen effect from on High of judicious God acting upon them.

Thus the duplicitous Vasak sent all [of the hostages] in advance of himself to the country of Iran, in the thirteenth [139] year of king Yazkert [III] of Iran [A. D. 452]. Then he himself went to the king of Iran with elaborate preparation and much equipage, thinking to reveal his treacherous loyalty to the king and nobility of the Aryans, and, in his crazed perception of things, to receive as payment the very kingdom of Armenia. "Should this not happen," he reasoned, "in any case I will receive *patiw* and standing [*zpatiw ew zgahs*]

without any doubt or dispute." But he did not ask the lord God, who said through the prophet: "They reigned, but not through me, and they made an agreement, but not through my will [Isaiah 30, 1]." When the treacherous man's hour approached, he thought he was to receive great honor, but, as the above-cited just word of God suggested, the mask was pulled away from his duplicitous plans and all the man's bitter intentions were completely overturned, just as the poisonous plan of Achitophel had been [II Kings, 15, 31].

Thus seated on mules, Vasak and the multitude going with the impious one, set off on the journey, following the same road that the blessed priests of God were being taken on. [Vasak's party] approached the champions of Christ. The latter inquired: "Whose multitude is that?" A man replied: "The lord [140] of Siwnik's." And they said: "He is approaching us." The holy ones ceased asking questions and paid attention to the road. The blessed Yovsep' asked Ghewond, that man of God: "I know that Vasak, in his lewd shamelessness, is coming to greet us. Think what we ought to do, command us, and we will do it." The blessed Ghewond replied: "Seek not to learn the doctrine of the Savior from this man. 'Whatever town or village you enter, find out who is worthy in it, and stay with him until you depart. As you enter the house, salute it. And if the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it; but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you [Matthew 10, 11-13].'" As they were ending their questions to one another, Vasak, the duplicitous lord of Siwnik', approached them. Informed about them, [Vasak] quickly dismounted and greeted the holy men. None [g76] [of the captives] in any way let it appear that they had enmity toward him, rather, they received him with joyful affection. This was especially true of the blessed Ghewond who always appeared happy and joyful, and who now spoke at length with Vasak the prince of Siwnik', using words of agreeable seriousness. Hearing the venerable man's sweet and gracious words, [Vasak] who was crazed by a *dew*, thought that they did not know about the evil he had done to them. For this reason, comforted even more by the words that man of God, Ghewond, [Vasak] travelled with them for a long time.

[141] After they were through talking, the lord of Siwnik' wanted the holy men to dine with him at their halting place, and he beseeched them for this. When the treacherous Vasak had advanced a little from where [the captives] were, the blessed Ghewond called out to him loudly using his title of honor: "Lord of Siwnik', Lord of Siwnik'!" [Vasak] eagerly responded: "What say you, Lords?" The holy man replied: "Of all we have said to you, we forgot to ask the most important and useful [information]. Where are you going?" The duplicitous Vasak heard this and sank into great despair. He replied in astonishment: "I am going to my lord, to receive a great reward for my great and worthwhile efforts." The blessed Ghewond answered: "Your *dew* which deceptively supported you in breaking the oath you made on the holy Gospel, now leads you to believe that the Aryans can give you only the kingship of the land of Armenia as a reward for your 'worthwhile efforts'—that, and nothing else. But indeed, should you, during your lifetime, manage to stick your head above the shoulders of the Armenians, then the Lord God has not spoken with me." When the treacherous prince Vasak heard this, all of his vain hopes were dispelled and dashed and he realized the personal destruction which was about to encompass him. For, when everything was over, the holy man's words did not miss the mark.

[142] 43. The duplicitous prince of Siwnik' reached the court, and after first seeing the court nobility, he went into the presence of king Yazkert. For the moment, the king and all the grandees at court received him with respect and pomp. Although they knew about his harmfulness, the vow and oath which he had treacherously sworn with saint Vardan and with all the princes of the land of Armenia—to destroy the others and to show himself as loyal—[the Iranians] in no way let [Vasak] know this. Rather, remaining silent about this, as though they did not know, [the Iranians] honored him as a loyal and benevolent man. [This situation continued] until they brought to court the blessed priests of God, the senior *tanuters* of Armenia and the *sepuhs* who had revolted, as well as the boys from the Mamikonean *tohm* and [77] the Kamsarakans and from others *azgs*, the children of the rebels whom the treacherous [Vasak] led first before the *hazarapet* Mihrnerseh and the other court nobility.



The impious *hazarapet* of the Aryans first ordered that the priests be brought before him. He asked the blessed presbyter of Arac, Samuel, and his spiritual son, the blessed deacon Abraham who had extinguished the Artashat fire: "With what boldness and under whose orders did you dare to do such a deed, which is worthy of death, and to put your hands forth to such a great fire, having no fear of kings or princes? [143] For when such a deed is perpetrated against a man, it merits death, to say nothing about perpetrating it against the gods." When the two holy men, the lord Samuel and Abraham, heard this, they replied in unity, demonstrating their fearless bravery with accurate speech and contempt, ridiculing the senseless question of the listeners: "Our laws also order us to fear the worthy and just kings and princes. But we refuse to replace the fear of God with fear of a man. And as for the fire which, you say, we killed, in no way did we harm it either by beating it or by wicked torture. Rather, seek the misdeed in the mob and the attendants there at the time, who had no fear of their gods, and who scornfully abandoned it and departed. We saw no man, but only the fire, in ashes. And so, it remained thus for many days without anyone giving it any attention, until we took the ashes and extinguished it. For we had always observed its attendants carrying the strewn ashes and dumping them on the ground. But as for [the information] given to you about us—that we took the fire and extinguished it with water—it in no way befits your fairness to become enraged with us and to put us to death. Rather, [our actions] deserve praise and honor. For indeed according to your doctrine, which we have heard from your teachers, you have said, and it is true, that water is the brother of fire. Not only did we not extinguish or harm the fire, but we were [144] honoring it, and doing it a good turn. If any are worthy of death, it is the ones who scorned and abandoned the fire, and not we who took it and gave it to its brother so that it would be kept affectionately and with much pomp, entrusted to it forever."

44. Similarly [the authorities] threateningly questioned the other holy priests of God:

the blessed Yovsep', the true *kat'oghikos* of Armenia,  
the blessed bishop of Erheshtunik', lord Sahak,  
the most holy presbyter, lord Ghewond,

and the other blessed priests who were with them at the questioning:

the blessed Mushe Aghbakac'i, who was the court presbyter of the prince of Arcrunik', Nershapuh,  
the blessed Arshen, the presbyter from the district of Bagrewand from the village called Eghegeak, and  
[g78] the blessed deacon K'ajaj who was from the district of Rstunik', a student of the holy bishop, Sahak.

They were asked: "With what fearless audacity could you have enveloped your wretched selves with numerous crimes deserving the death penalty? You ruined the *atrushans*, and murdered such a rich fire which the gods had bestowed upon the Aryan world to protect it from bad and damaging things. Should some enemies attack us from all sides, that fire preserved us. [145] You killed the mages. With your witchcraft you destroyed the brave Vardan who was useful to the lord of the Aryans. His very great deeds are recalled in the Aryan world. Many military commanders and other Aryans with whom he fought remember his stoutheartedness. Indeed our godlike lord saw this bravery with his own eyes in Marvirhot. There are few men in the Aryan world who can adequately praise the man and his deeds. And you, having been made wretched by your useless and harmful teaching, have destroyed such a man. And in such a land, an inestimable amount of blood of many Aryans and non-Aryans was shed. Now, you cannot yourselves think up a death, and a way of quitting the light (which you see today, but are unworthy of) more severe, or befitting your deeds [than I will inflict upon you] when you will experience many torments and die wickedly."

After hearing all of these words threatening punishment from the poisonous *hazarapet* of the Aryans, Mihrnerseh, and all the court nobility, Ghewond, the man of God, came forward and responded: "All [of the clerics] who stand before your authority in interrogation, about whom you spoke at length, are distinguished [from each other] in the priestly order in accordance with our faith and with the God-given command [146] of

the Church's arrangement." Then he acquainted them with each of the holy men, one by one, explaining who each one was and giving the names, and mentioning what degree in the Christian order each one had attained. For although [the Iranians] had heard the names and deeds of each [of the captives], and what they had done in the land of Armenia, nonetheless, they were unfamiliar with the names of the holy men and were uninformed about the honor held by each one in the Christian consecration. Regarding the blessed Yovsep', [Ghewond] said: "That man whom you see, although younger than myself, is nonetheless worthily ranked as the head of the entire Armenian priesthood." Pointing out the blessed Sahak, [Ghewond] said: "This man holds the perfect order of consecration according to the correct and true Christ-given ordination of our faith. Others, and myself also, are of the priestly order. Should someone be less known at this time, especially [g79] those who have sought martyrdom and been found worthy, such an individual is greater yet in the abundant kingdom of God. These are not my words, but those of Him Who is our Creator and *vardapet*, Who said: 'He who holds all [of these commandments] shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven [Matthew 5, 19].' Those whom you have commanded to respond to us with such words and threats do not frighten us. For we did not, as some now think, carry [147] out such a great and awesome act as ignorant people, without a plan; nor do we regret it. Nor do we stand in your awesome presence in fear rather than joy. Rather, we are happy and delighted with what we have done. We are surrounded by diverse sorrows and even await death eagerly, so that we be worthy.

"Now regarding the destruction of *atrushans* or the killing of fire, that you mentioned, in our Bible it is said that 'The gods which did not create heaven and earth will be lost beneath the earth [Jeremiah 10, 11].' For fire is composed of many materials. There are materials of which it is composed, and those materials will extinguish it. Those elements which compose fire will cause it to blaze up. Now, a fire is born of iron, stone, water, and wood. It is otherwise with the glass bead from which fire comes [*ayl e ew uln spitak, or i nmane lini hur*]. Fire can spring from argil mixed with silver, when this material is held up against the sun [*lini i kawarcat'oy hur, yorzham enddem aregakan ok' shoghac'uc'eal dic'e*]. If one takes a fire made of iron and puts iron on top of it, it will go out. Similarly, a fire of stone, if covered with stones will go out. The same is true of fires of water or other materials. But a fire made of wood, will grow stronger with more wood. Thus, it is not the fire, but the wood which should be styled a god, since it both gives birth to, and sustains, the fire. Is it [148] not the lowest evil of deviance to style mutual enemies, those things created by man, to call them brothers, and god? Now if [the fire] deals with its brother and parent in a hostile fashion, how would it know to honor its worshipper or to be hostile to an inimical force? Furthermore [the fire] mercilessly eats those [materials] which gave it birth. Fire is not diminished by all sorts of materials. Thus all materials of the earth are gods. If you believe this, why then with blind intellects do you term half of them gods, and loathe the other half for their dirty work? It is the same as constructing palaces of brick and stone, and then using the same materials for making privies and outhouses, [the same as] using silver for making goblets, and also for making chamberpots. You take fire—of the gods—and roast and cook cattle and sheep; and you take water to water the fields, yet also to clean away purulent matter and waste. Some of the water taken alone, some of it mixed with wine, you drink without feeling terror or horror. Why should I be forced to mention or enumerate one by one your senseless acts? The brave champion Vardan and others like him were unable to serve such deception, and always protested to you [g80] that your worship was false and your doctrines, foolish. But you did not listen. Tyrannies do not permit rights to be recognized, just as presently. As a result, [the Vardanians] were unable to bear it, gave their lives, and were crowned. And indeed, we encouraged them and were their true *vardapets*."

[149] When the holy man of God, Ghewond, had said all of this, the blessed priests praised [his words] as if with one tongue, in loud voices. They were extremely happy. When the impious Mihrnerseh and the other Aryan nobles who sat before him heard this loud praise from the holy men and saw the delight on their faces, [Mihrnerseh] said to them in a rage: "Our laws do not command us to be angry at someone without hearing the words from his own mouth. Now we saw that you were somewhat joyous listening to the words of that destroyer of your land [Ghewond]. We are well informed about all the deeds and the sorcerer's doctrine of

that man, through which the useful brave Vardan and his comrades were lost. Wicked recompense and death have been prepared [for Ghewond] as is fitting. But now, let us know if you share the same words as that man who deserves death, words which [Ghewond] so audaciously and arrogantly dared to express before us."

The blessed Yovsep' and Sahak responded: "Lord Ghewond has, for a long time, thought over and shared with all of us, all the words and responses which he spoke before you. He said them in a manner befitting his holiness, and was encouraged by God's aid. The words which today [Ghewond], in accordance with his God-given knowledge, beautifully outlined for you, he has thought over and spoken to us. All of us share the same thoughts and the same determination, and we hope we shall be worthy to die for them. With the disease of bitterness added to [150] your anger, you made an enemy of him. Blessed are those who, with their mind's eye, are just and perspicacious. But the grandees as well as [their] juniors are seized by physical illness and weaken. You are the ones with just such a disease. Do not wrathfully be hostile, for you are worthy of much ridicule."

The impious prince [Mihnerseh] grew furious at the saints for turning their scorn at the king. He ordered the executioners to violently strike the mouths of the saints with chains, until their mouths filled and overflowed with blood. So doing, he dismissed the *atean*. As for the saints, after the fashion of the blessed Apostles, they left the *atean* with joyous faces, since for the name of Christ they had been worthy of dishonor, beating, and responsibility.

45. As regards the others in fetters—the *tanuters* and senior *sepuhs*—Mihnerseh ordered the executioners to take them and to keep them in stringent bondage, until the [g81] king himself should say that they should be brought before him for questioning, so that he could hear what they had to say. The next day the impious Mihnerseh went into the presence of king Yazkert and informed him about all of his questions as well as the responses of the Armenian priests. [151] The king, angered, commanded that on the following day a great *atean* should be held in his presence, and that everyone, Aryan and non-Aryan and whoever held the king's honor [*ew zor inch' ew uner ok' zpatiw t'agaworin*] should come prepared, while all the captives should be led into his presence. But he ordered the impious Mihnerseh to take the boys and lads of the Mamikonean *tohm*, the Kamsarakans, and other *tohms*, and to give them to whomever he pleased

When all the soldiers who held the king's honor heard this, they hastened to the *atean* the next day. As for the oath-breaking prince of Siwnik', Vasak, he decked himself out with all the honors he had received from the king and came and entered the palace of the court with great pomp. For, short of the dignity of kings, which had eluded him, there was no single beneficial court honor that he did not possess. Furthermore, [Vasak] thought that he would be receiving the kingship of the great land of Armenia. But the wretch did not know that God had quit his side, and this impure creature [the *dew*] was choking him. In that hour, the word of Ghewond, the blessed man of God, was fulfilled upon the wretch. When the entire palace was filled with Aryans and non-Aryans, the king ordered the rebel Armenians to be brought forth in shackles.

[152] [The captives] were brought into the king's presence. The king asked them: "With what audacity, thinking or imagining what, or foreseeing what assistance, did you attempt such an awesome deed? Now you see that it has led to the destruction of yourselves and your land." When all of the Armenian *naxarars* heard this, they were silent for a moment and gave no answer. The king repeated his previous question and demanded a prompt response from them. They replied: "May your benevolence grant that one of our number whom we shall select [may speak] so that you may hear everything naturally regarding the beginnings, plans and actions of what we undertook. For we should not all speak before you as a disorganized mob."

The king and all the nobility gladly accepted this, and [the king] so ordered. [The captives] brought forth Arshawir Kamsarakan, and said that everything could be fully learned by listening to him. Arshawir Kamsarakan, strengthened by the holy Spirit, came forward and began to speak before the king and all the nobility, fearlessly:

"The initial cause of the problem arose when the thought which had formed in the head of your kings, was revealed to us, and [g82] furthered with force, that you had ordered us to hold a faith [153] which neither we, nor our ancestors' ancestors knew nor served. We often protested that it was impossible for us to consent to serve a faith which our ancestors had not served and which seems heavy and contemptible to us. Your very truthful assembly can testify that there was such a protest from us. Though you did not want to listen, through your forceful will, and through force you undertook to [make us] accept the faith. With our lips atremble we exalted that false [religion], wanting to cover with deception for a moment [our] fear of you. In our hearts we regarded the deed as loathsome, and we hated [doing it], but we decided to get ourselves free through strategems, to go to our land and to quit it with our wives and children, departing to be lost in a foreign country. The first to do this was your servant Vardan, who in everyone's opinion was prominent in the land of the princes. Many Iranians from the senior *tohms* who today are well and here with you know this and can testify to my words. Taking only his wife and family, [Vardan] turned to go as a fugitive to the country of Byzantium, out of fear of you.

"When the lord of Siwnik', Vasak, realized what had happened, [154] he quickly sent as emissaries the senior *tanuters* and *sepuhs* and the blessed priests, to take [to Vardan] the blessed Book of our faith, sealed with his own ring, the very Book on which he had indeed sworn. Among [the emissaries], [Vasak] also sent me. [Vasak] wrote the following in a letter [to Vardan]: "Why are you fleeing, what and whom do you fear? You did not say. Do not flee and fear no one. Though you are terrified of the lord of the Aryans and his strength, do not fear. Return, and we shall write a letter to the emperor, and give ourselves to him in service. He will agree that such a great land would go into his service by our own will, and he will delightedly agree to give us a force. [The Byzantines] and we, united, will tire out the lord of the Aryans and the Aryan people. Should the emperor think otherwise and not recognize his advantage in this, then [be aware of the fact that] when I was the *marzpan* of Iberia/Georgia, and the Gate of the Aghbanians/Aghuans was under my control, many of the Huns' military commanders became my friends through covenant and oath, and they [will] come to me today by the same oath. The taxes of the entire land of Armenia are with me, all the officials are in my hands, as well as much equippage taken from the Iranian officials here in Armenia which is in my treasury. Should I send part of this to the Huns, I will so greatly arouse them that the land of Iran will be insufficient for their looting."

[155] "Having written all of this with an oath, Vasak, the lord of Siwnik', caused Vardan to turn back, involuntarily. [Vardan, at the time the emissaries reached him] was near [g83] the territory of foreign princes, who are not subject to your authority. The letter which the lord of Siwnik' wrote to Vardan is intact, bears the seal, and is here with us. Order to see it. Regarding his sons, [Vasak] had said: 'I will take all the Iranians in Armenia, place them in shackles and put them in secure fortresses until the king is forced to release my sons.' He did indeed seize a few Iranians and temporarily bound them. And when he treacherously decided to carry out the plan of our destruction which he had been thinking about, then he released them. [Vasak] also wrote to the emperor, other court nobility, and to the *sparapet* of Antioch. Then he sent Vahan Amatuni and other *naxarars* from each *tohm* to Byzantium. After this, he sent Vardan and us with a brigade to fight in Aghbania/Aghuania. Having stupidly betrayed us, he precipitated this evil. He killed such a useful servant of yours [as Vardan], and was the cause of the deaths of such a multitude of Iranians and Armenians, and the destruction of the land. And now, behold him there, seated in your midst without a care, decorated like a doer of good deeds. Why do you not order him to show all the letters, which he wrote and sealed to the emperor, to the entire land of the Byzantines, and to many others. Whatever the will of you [156] Aryans is, order it carried out upon us. As your justice demands, since the written and sealed [letters] are here, there is no need for superfluous words and loquaciousness."

When the king of Iran and the nobility of the court heard all of this in order from Arshawir Kamsarakan, and saw the letter written by Vasak, the lord of Siwnik', king Yazkert and all the princes of the court were greatly astonished.

46. Then the king summoned the prince of Siwnik', Vasak, to come forward and he began to speak to him in a violent and extremely angry fashion: "Indeed we have heard about all of your duplicitous affairs and actions. But come now, say, what were you imagining, what were you thinking that you dared to undertake and carry out such damaging deeds? For you were the prince and chief of the land of Armenia. First, you encouraged people by words written by you in letters, letters which have been given to us to read, and from which we were accurately informed of this. You made our meritorious and useful servant, the brave Vardan and his comrades swear an oath, and then deceived [us] by letters sent to the emperor and to his *sparapet*. You duplicitously made such brave, useful, and meritorious men as Vardan and his other comrades swear an oath. Then you sent him with an army to Aghbania/Aghuania [157] causing him to dare to go against the Iranian forces. You duplicitously betrayed the land of the Aryans, you destroyed and were the cause of the killing of so many of my Aryan and [g84] non-Aryan servants. While the emperor or the king of the Huns wanted to forcibly take from me such a servant as our Vardan, with all the strength of the Aryans I fought, and permitted no rest until I had him back. And so you, with your own hand killed such a useful servant, destroyed such a great and advantageous land, and then insolently dared to come and see us, as though we were unaware of your treacherous action. But know this: from now on you are no longer the lord of Siwnik', and all the evils which you planned and carried out will now be visited upon your own wicked head. My taxes from the land of Armenia, the Iranians whom you killed, the large amount of equipment which you took—I have ordered that [the value of them] be demanded from your *tun* and your sons', until all of it is paid back."

Now although the pitiful oath-breaker Vasak wanted to say something and to reply, no one listened to his words or wanted to hear them. For [the consequences of] breaking an oath on the blessed Gospel, and the curse of that blessed man of God, Ghewond, had come upon him, surrounded and trapped him. Although the [158] man enjoyed some merit with the Iranians, and attempted to demonstrate it then, it was no use. Mired even more in accusation, [his words] hurt him. The word of the psalmist was fulfilled regarding him, that "He emerges from his trial accused, and his prayers are turned to sins [Psalms 108, 7]." King Yazkert then commanded that all [of Vasak's] previous honors should be seized from him with insults. The guards beat and stripped him. Stripping him of the ornaments of honor of [his] lordship, they removed him from the court assembly in disgrace. That same day they appointed his enemy, Varazvaghan, the apostate *sepuh* of Siwnik', as lord of the land of Siwnik'. During the entire time that [Varazvaghan] held the authority in Siwnik', he worked many injustices, and constructed numerous fire-temples in the land of Siwnik', to the scandal of his House. As mentioned above, after being tormented for a long time by a *dew*, he died a wicked, bitter death.

The treacherous Vasak stayed at the court some years very grieved and experiencing great difficulties. He spent his days sighing and lamenting every day and every hour, to the point that he started beating his own face with his hand in hostile derision, saying: "Behold, you have fallen into this dishonorable state, which was brought on by your [159] violation of an oath sworn on the holy Gospel, and by the martyrs' blood of the blessed Vardan Mamikonean and of other worthy people who cooperated with him. They have inherited eternal life and left on earth a good and permanent name for themselves for all time. But you, sinner, [are fated] to spend the few remaining days of your life in remorse and pain, and eternal unending Gehena is ready and waiting for you." We were accurately informed about his sighs and [g85] tears which lasted until the day of his death, by prince Vasak's own attendants. That blessed man of God, Ghewond, related that [Vasak] died there in the country of Iran.

47. King Yazkert commanded that the following individuals should be held in Vrkan in stringent bondage until the sixteenth year of his reign [A.D. 455]:

the holy priests of God:

lord Yovsep', the *kat'oghikos*,  
lord Sahak, the bishop of Rhshtunik',

the blessed presbyter lord Ghewond,  
lord Mushe, the court presbyter of Nershapuh, lord of Arcrunik',  
lord Samuel, presbyter of Arac,  
lord Abraham the deacon,  
lord Arshen, presbyter of Eghegek,  
lord K'ajaj, the deacon.

[160] In addition to these eight priests, were the following thirty-one bound Christ-loving *naxarars* of Armenia:

from the *tohm* of Siwnik', the two brothers Babken and Bakur,  
from the *tohm* of Arcrunik', Nershapuh, Shawasp, Shngin, Pargew and Tachat,  
from the *tohm* of Mamikonean, Hamazaspean, Hamazasp, Artawazd and Mushegh,  
from the *tohm* of Kamsarakan, Arshawir, T'at', and Varjay,  
from the *tohm* of Amatunik', Vahan, Arhanjar and Arhnak,  
from the *tohm* of Gnunik', Atom,  
from the *tohm* of Dimak'sean, T'at'ul, Satoy plus two other members of the *tohm*,  
from the *tohm* of Anjewac'ik', Shmawon and Arhawan,  
from the *tohm* of the first Arhaweghean, P'ap'ak, Varazden, and Dat,  
from the *tohm* of Arcrunik', Aprusam,  
from the *tohm* of Mandakunik', Sahak and P'arsman,  
from the *tohm* of the Tashrac'ik', Vren,  
and from the *tohm* of Rhop'sean, Babik and Yohan.

48. In the 16th year of his reign, king Yazkert took all of his troops and went to war against the Kushans. He also ordered that the bound Armenians, priests and *naxarars*, be taken along from Hyrcania. Arriving in the land of Apar, he came to the *shahastan* called Niwshapuh. [161] He ordered that the bound Armenians, priests and *naxarars*, be held there in a fortress in the Niwshapuh *shahastan*. But [Yazkert] commanded that the two blessed priests, lord Samuel and Abraham be taken along with him. He had them constantly oppressed with wicked torments, heavy shackles, and beatings to strike awe and terror into the Christians who were with him in the caravan. When they reached the borders of the enemy, [the Iranians] were unable to implement any part of the king's demands; rather, totally defeated, they turned back in shame, and [the king] lost choice and renowned men from his troops, as well as *rhamik* cavalrymen. For the enemy did not battle with the Iranians face to face [g86]. Instead, they unexpectedly fell upon one wing after another, putting many men to the sword, while they themselves returned unharmed, and vanished. Doing this for many days, they defeated the Iranian troops with severe blows.

When king Yazkert realized his ignominious disgrace, he sank into unbelievable depression. He anxiously demanded to know the causes of his encountering such a heavy defeat. In doubt, sometimes he cast the blame on the disunity of his [162] brigade, sometimes on the laziness of the mages, saying: "They were unable to propitiate the minds of the gods with gifts and worthy sacrifices. Thus enraged, [the gods] did not want to aid us. Rather, abandoning us, they strengthened the enemy's side. And we, defeated, returned full of shame." When the mages learned about the king's anger they consulted among themselves, and on the advice of the impious *hazarapet*, Mihrnerseh, they began speaking with the king, saying: "Brave of the Aryans [*Areac' k'aj*], may your mind not veer to a different explanation for the bad experiences we have had from the enemy. [The cause] is rather the wrath of the gods who are extremely angry at us because of the god-killing Armenian priests, who long since deserved death, but because of your delay, are still alive today. For if they were merely killers of men, and if you delayed so long, preserving them from death, such an action would be very heavy and blameworthy. But they dared set their hands forth to kill the gods, yet they are still alive and see the light of day. Indeed, [for this reason] we have been mercilessly punished by the gods."

The king listened to this and, believing that their false explanations were true, was moved to great anger regarding the bound priests. Considering that it was indeed their [163] fault that such a slaughter of his troops had occurred, [Yazkert] immediately ordered that first those priests who were with him, the blessed presbyter Samuel and the holy deacon Abraham, should be taken to an unknown place very far from the caravan and beheaded there, so that no Christian would be able to find their bones and revere them. But before killing them, [Yazkert] ordered that blessed Samuel's right hand should be cut off and placed in the hand of lord Abraham, and that blessed Abraham's right hand should be cut off and placed in the hand of lord Samuel. He said [that he was doing this] "since they dared stretch forth their hands against the venerable fire and kill it." Then he ordered them beheaded. Thus were these saints martyred in the district named Vardges, on the seventh day of the month of Hrotic' [*Hrotic'*, the twelfth month of the ancient Armenian calendar].

49. After this king Yazkert ordered that an emissary go in great haste to Asorestan where the blessed bishop of [g87] Basen, T'at'ik, was being held in bondage, having been wickedly tortured for a long time. He ordered that [T'at'ik] be killed there, and that the saint's body be disposed of so that none of the Christians would find it and take the bones to revere them. When the emissary arrived, the mages there carried out the order and were filled with joy. But before the saint's death, for many days [the mages] flayed the flesh from the [164] holy man's bones with tortures. Then, in accordance with the king's order, they killed him by beheading him with a sword.

50. [Yazkert] also gave an order regarding the other blessed priests who had been left bound in the fortress at Niwshapuh. He ordered Vehdenshapuh, the *ambarapet*, to take two other nobles as assistants, Jnikan, the court *maypet*, and Movan, the *anderjapet*, who was an assistant to the *Movpetan movpet*, to quickly go in advance of himself, to remove the blessed priests from the prison where they were being held bound with the Armenian *naxarars*. [Yazkert] ordered that they should be taken to an untrodden and deserted place far from the city and cruelly tortured there in whatever manner [Vehdenshapuh] chose until they died. But the king ordered Vehdenshapuh to be extremely careful that no one should find out that they had been taken from the city, or by what road, or the place where they were to be slain. "Since," he said, "we have accurately learned that those who belong to the erroneous sect of Christianity will go to their deaths with great joy for [such a fate]. For, they say that if someone should have in his home even a tiny fragment of the bones of someone who died for their God, nothing bad or malicious [165] can befall him, his house, or his loved ones. They also say that [such relics] give aid in speaking at trials, wisdom, bravery, and protection. To the point of death they strive in person and with their wealth to obtain but a tooth or fingernail from such [martyred Christians] and to take it to their homes. Furthermore we have been informed by trustworthy men who had belonged to their devious sect but now hold our radiant and just faith, that their women, sons and daughters will take their ornaments of gold, silver and pearls and give them in exchange for even a very small portion of the bones of people who have so died, regarding [the bones] as very respect-worthy and venerable. What else shall I say? Ornaments of their fathers and mothers, which were made for them with great labor—[ornaments] having a neck or base of extremely costly pearls [*ew zharc' ew zmarc' zards, zor yanun noc'a arareal e mecaw ashxatut'eamb, chitaks ew kam ztaks inch' margartoy kari mecagnoy...*] Christian women regard it as nothing to remove them from their persons and give them to purchase but a small piece of the bones of such [martyrs]. So you be careful that the site of their killing is somewhere that those who hold such beliefs and are awaiting the bones to revere them, will be unable to locate."

When the *ambarapet*, Vehdenshapuh, heard all these words [g88] from the king in the land of Apar, he entered that fortress [166] in the Niwshapuh *shahastan*. He spoke [the following] false words [to the captives], duplicitously giving them "good news": "The king of kings has commanded me to dispatch the Armenian priests held here in bonds to their own land. With regard to the other nobles from Armenia, he stipulated that he would release them from their shackles when he arrives." When the multitude [of captives] in the *shahastan* heard this, they thought that Vehdenshapuh was speaking the truth. But when the blessed priests heard it, through the influence of the holy Spirit they immediately realized that the good hour of the

hope of their martyrdom had arrived. They began speaking with the Armenian *naxarars* with whom they were bound, saying: "Although Vehdenshapuh wanted to conceal the truth, he was unable to do so. For both of us shall be killed as indeed all of you heard from him. You, with the mercy of Christ, will be freed from bondage; we, with the power of the holy Spirit, having passed the wearisome days of our lives as exiles, will go to our natural land and family, where the ranks of the Apostles are, and the dwellings of the saints, to the army of the *tanuter* and creator of all, Christ, Who said: 'Wherever I am, my servant will be [John 12, 26].'"

51. While they were discussing this matter, one of the executioners—as was accurately learned from the blessed [167] Xuzhik—a man affectionately inclined toward the bound Armenian *naxarars*—came and revealed to them [the Iranians'] actual plan. He informed them of the truth, regarding how the king had given the order concerning the killing of the priests. When the *naxarars* were certain of this, they wept bitterly, not because they did not want the saints martyred, since they themselves desired to be worthy of the same, but because of those who would be left orphaned and unconsolated.

As for the holy men, when they accurately learned that the glad tidings regarding them were definite, they were strengthened and became joyously happy. They glorified God, and immediately prepared for the evening worship, which on that day was later than on other days. The fact that the *ambarakapet* had not come early to the *shahastan* meant that they were obliged to spend the night there. After the holy men completed the canon of the evening service, they enjoyed a poor and small [meal, provided for] by [their] maintenance [*vayelein sugh inch' ew doyn rochkovn orpes bazmaxortiks anushahotut'eamb*] as though it consisted of many fragrant delicacies. Joy in the delicious meal prolonged the joy of comfort, with the power of the holy Spirit of God. Arising from the meal, they glorified and blessed God, reciting prayers. The holy priests of God commanded the bound *naxarars*, in accordance with each one's rank, to pass that night in prayer and vigils. [168] [The priests] said to all of them: "If any of you today should travel to Armenia would you not, truly, send letters [g89] of greeting and messages of joyous delight to each of your dear ones? You should beseech God about the journey so that each person reaches his family safely, and that your compact with Him is fulfilled. But behold, now we are about to leave you to go to God. All of you beseech the Savior Christ and His holy Spirit that we, with intrepid encouragement, be worthy of the desirable heavenward road, and that we salute the most merciful Christ and the blessed brigade of Apostles, the prophets and all the saints, and recommend you to them. With the intercession of the kind and most compassionate creator, Christ, He may be your consoler and savior. May you be released from the heroic shackles which now confine you, and may your detractors and enemies be put to shame. May you see the land of Armenia and your families, and may your bones be placed there with those of your fathers. May your souls be freed from the invisible shackles of Satan, and be kept unharmed until the day of the [coming of] lord Jesus Christ."

When all the *naxarars* heard such a command from the blessed priests of Christ, they replied: "Who can be conquered by sleep in the Kingdom, where there is no sleeplessness and no burden of weariness. And who will be grieved by disease in the eternal goodness, where pain, sorrow, and sobbing [169] are absent? For us, today is a precursor of that day, and an opportunity to hear in our midst the doctrines of the blessed priests of God sermonized. And why should sadness be in anyone's heart? For we are worthy to see in our own lifetimes, in the flesh, our parents and spiritual *vardapets*, who are like angels, and who, in their death are joyful. But our eyes are full of tears, like Christ the Savior of all seeing Jerusalem, or Lazarus who was raised from the dead, [wondering] why the deathless and disease-free creation of the Creator, ensnared by the trickery of the enemy, returns again to earth, fallen to disease and death."

When the holy priests of God heard such words of glad tidings from the *naxarars*, all of them began to raise their hands to heaven, thanking God with great gladness, saying: "We thank You, God, that through the grace of the preaching of the blessed Apostles, You begot many Apostles, and through the grace of ascetic martyrs, You begot many martyrs. Such an Apostle was the confessor lord Gregory, a doer of clean deeds and a teacher of a clear and vigilant doctrine which/who made everyone strive for the good, who begot *vardapets*



and innumerable martyrs, many cenobites, uncountable orders of virgins, creating in everyone a temple for the dwelling of the blessed Trinity. We thank you, Savior [g90], [170] for making the sheep of the flock of saint Gregory more rational than the shepherds, and for making students drawn from the people more wise than the *vardapets*. We are now strengthened and encouraged by the graceful words of our spiritual parents, fathers to sons, *vardapets* to students, priests to the people. We depart from those who have placed us on the path to You joyfully. [Our spiritual teachers] remaining in the flesh stay with you and are strengthened by you. Preserve them with Your almighty right hand, surround them with the security of Your holy Spirit, comfort them with the gladness of Your word. Give them our peace and let [Your] grace grow in them."

So blessing the venerable captives and entrusting them to the Almighty, [the priests] said: "He will preserve you in health, and always comfort you with His holy Spirit. Be not saddened, but rejoice in the word that 'I shall not leave you as orphans, but will come to you [John 14, 18].' For indeed He has come and is among you. He will release you from the bonds which now confine you, and will keep you with the hope of His aid. He will cause you to boldly say in glory: 'For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded [171] as sheep to be slaughtered [Romans 8, 36].' The lord of all will crush Satan beneath your feet and display you as prominent and radiant in the midst of impious people, and He will return you to your country. May he preserve your *tuns*, nourish your children, and let your son(s) inherit the share of their fathers. Glory to Him now and forever, amen."

The blessed Ghewond completed these words of doctrine and consolation in accordance with the command of the blessed Yovsep' and Sahak, who also blessed the venerable *naxarars* and the others gathered with them. They entrusted all of them to the holy Trinity and completed their prayers. Every one of the venerable captive *naxarars* resembled those men who had assembled in [Christ's] attic, and they dwelled among the blessed Apostles, filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit, encouraged and taking refuge in divine hope.

52. While all the senses of the listeners were transported with delight, finding the inspired doctrine of the Apostle-like *vardapets* to be like a meal of many fragrant delicacies, suddenly a multitude of executioners arrived from the *ambarapet*, carrying many fiercely blazing torches. For in accordance with the eternal, unchanging divine instruction [172] to birds, it was the hour of cockcrow. [The executioners] had with them a multitude of blacksmiths with the tools of their trade—anvils, hammers, chisels and files—to file, cut and remove the irons from the saints' hands, feet and necks. What they were unable to cut with files, they smashed [g91] at with hammers, placing the iron poles/nails on anvils until they broke. For they were more solid and heavy than all ordinary iron with which they bound those people condemned to death. The mages had had them dealt with in this fashion as though they were malicious, destructive, god-slaying men. This was especially true as regards the chains of the blessed *kat'oghikos* Yovsep', for [the mages] had said that his chains were to be more confining, heavier, and more awkward than the others.

When the holy priests of God saw the executioners and the multitude of blacksmiths who had come with Vehdenshapuh, they all became sad and agitated. For they wanted to answer their summonses to heaven wearing the same ornaments which, for the name of God, they had been deserving of wearing on themselves willingly and joyfully for such a long time. They wanted to go to the site of their martyrdom wearing them, and, at the place where they would become worthy of eternal [173] glory, to put aside there once and for all the chains and fetters of the mundane burdens of this world. [They resembled] the men and women who fanatically seek glory, and are insatiably covered with gold and precious gems and pearls and enthusiastically attach [these ornaments] to their own hands, feet, and necks. Should an enemy or a tyrannical prince by some misfortune capture [them] and remove [the jewels] [the captives] would increase their laments and be unable to bear it for a minute. Thus do [the wealthy] put on their own [ornaments], not regarding them as heavy, and not feeling them. Rather, when they see others [adorned] with another material, they feel envy, wondering why that too was not among their adornments, and wondering how (once they possess that ornament too) they may appear greater than another. And should someone heap all the world's precious things upon such a

person, to the point that he suffocated, he would not say it was too much. Yet such transitory ornaments were not as elegant as the chains of the children of the father-like martyr Gregory, blessed and angelic people who bore these beautiful, luxurious, and venerable chains with pride and joy on their blessed hands and necks. For many hours the blacksmiths chiseled [the chains] and used diverse other implements, yet were unable to cut the thickness of the nails. Subsequently [174] [the blacksmiths] placed [the chains] on anvils and broke them with hammers. But they barely freed the saints' bodies of the iron, wickedly cutting and wounding their bodies. Yet [the priests] regarded these frightful pains as nothing. On the contrary, the work dragged on, until the second hour of day, while [the priests], and those bound Armenian *naxarars* with them spent the time praying and glorifying Christ, the easer of pains [g92].

53. Then Vehdenschapuh and those assistants with him ordered that the noteworthy men of the *shahastan* be summoned secretly at night. Similarly some of the prominent mages [were summoned]. They were then charged with the royal order: "Keep in mind [the question of] your own life and [the existence] of your House. Keep in mind the dread of kings, who, resembling the gods, dare to kill, spare, honor or dishonor. From this day until the entire royal caravan has passed and reached Hyrcania, let no one permit a single Armenian who is in this *shahastan* to go outside the gate of the *shahastan*. [This includes] an Armenian man (wherever he comes from), or a lad of the captive Armenian *naxarars*, or a lad of the bound presbyters (whom we are taking out today), or any Armenian at all (who has come from elsewhere and settled here). Should it [175] be found [that you have disobeyed this order], your *azg* will be stricken and the king will put you to a bitter death, while we shall be guiltless for such wickedness visited upon you. So take care out of fear, and see to it that pleasant thanks is our common lot." According to the king's command, they were afraid that one of the lads of the captive *naxarars* would secretly disguise himself and discover the road of their journey. It was as though the great treasure, the Savior Christ, the guide and revealer of the world had been sent among them, and they, like the Jews, ordered Pilate's troops to guard the cemetery. The Word of God with the angels, opened [the tomb] and revealed itself to those who believed in His name. What He said was shown to be eternally true: "He who believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do" [John 14, 12].

When the executioners had fulfilled Vehdenschapuh's order, they hastened to take the saints from the *shahastan*. When the Armenian *naxarars* who had remained bound in the fortress of the *shahastan* saw this, encouraged by and taking refuge in divine hope, with fearless bravery—in the presence of the entire multitude of the Iranian assembly, of foreigners and of [others] who were in the *shahastan*—they fell at the feet of the blessed priests of God and joyfully and delightedly kissed them for a long time, beseeching [the priests] to "remember us forever, [176] in your happiness and in the Kingdom." Similarly, the blessed priests of God with joyful hearts and happy faces took all of them in their embrace, saying: "May God bless you with power, give you lasting patience for the glory of His name, and strengthen you before the pagan peoples. May He free your bodies from the visible shackles which bind you, guide you to the land of your birth, put your bones to rest in the [g93] tombs of your fathers, free your souls from the invisible shackles of Satan, bring you to the district where we are travelling to and settle us with you in the eternal shelter where Christ sits on the right of God the Father."

When the infidels noticed that the blessed priests and the Armenian *naxarars* were so joyfully bidding each other farewell, they derided them internally, thinking them unaware of the king's order, and secretly said to each other: "If the priests knew the death which has been readied for them, they would have much cause for weeping, and would be unable to laugh and be so happy." But the impious ones did not know that it was precisely [their pending martyrdom] which was the cause of their delight, and that those who were departing and those who were remaining were rejoicing insatiably because of it. Having saluted each other, the blessed priests and the Armenian *naxarars* parted, [the priests] going to receive their crowns. When the holy priests of God [177] were departing, other children of the attendants of the venerable [priests and *naxarars*] who had come along with them voluntarily from the land of Armenia to wait on and serve those in bondage, also

hurriedly organized themselves, since they too longed to be worthy of a share in their good fate. This was especially true of the presbyter Xoren (who was from the village named Orkovi in the district of Ayrarat), and the venerable presbyter Abraham (who was from the village called Zenaks in the district of Tayk'). These men and those with them were taken to Vehdenschapuh, who asked: "Where are you preparing to go?" They replied: "We are ready to go wherever you take our spiritual lords and *vardapets* in life or death." Becoming enraged, Vehdenschapuh commanded that they should be forcibly seized and held in the *shahastan*. He also ordered, in accordance with the earlier command, that they should be extremely watchful until the time that all the royal troops had entered the *ostan*. "After that, any of the servants of the captive Armenian *naxarars* may leave the *shahastan* and go to serve the needs [of their lords] wherever their lords are sent." When the blessed priests Xoren and Abraham realized that the executioners were forcibly restraining them in the *shahastan*, they began to despair greatly, considering themselves to be unworthy of the heavenly crown which their *vardapets*, the sons of the champion [saint] Gregory, were about to receive.

[178] 54. At the sixth hour of the day, Vehdenschapuh and the priests left Niwshapuh, setting out on the road leading to Hyrcania. This was learned by a merchant who was a Xuzhik by nationality, and who, in the custom of trade, had travelled to Armenia many times and who was extremely well versed in the Armenian language. [Xuzhik is P'arpec'i's term for a native of Khuzistan.] This man from childhood had been a model of virtue, and was the son of Christ-loving believing parents. He was on very intimate terms with the [g94] venerable priests of God and the Armenian *naxarars* who were in bondage. He had rendered them many services and paid many of [their] expenses while they were still in Hyrcania, every day carefully watching so that he might be worthy [of possessing] a fragment of the remains of the saints. Having heard of the king's order, without delay he immediately entrusted his pack animals and baggage to his children and comrades, and, without telling anyone, took the most resistant and powerful of his pack animals. Resembling a man on a caravan, he took the road going to the land of Apar, accompanying the *ambarakpet* Vehdenschapuh, and pointing out to him the road and the lodging places where they might rest. He did this with prompt alertness, and Vehdenschapuh, pleased with all the services of the Xuzhik, liked him a great deal and was solicitous about his well-being. For it was God Who was furthering this matter.

Thus, having boldly found favor with the great prince, the Xuzhik was asked to entertain the *ambarakpet* by telling him about his village and parents, what kind of people they were, and where they were from. The Xuzhik studiously altered the facts about his past, saying: "I am the son of believing parents who, as their ancestors, were loyal servants of the fire and sun, and through them, from my childhood, I was committed to the same. With their protection I have lived to the present day and exist clearly recognizing the assistance of the gods." The venerable Xuzhik recalled the pretexts of Paul, the *vardapet* to the pagans, who, at times was a Pharisee and elsewhere a Roman (though according to the Gospel, the *vardapet* preached in, and was from, the city of Tarsus in the district of Cilicia, being of the same rank as the spiritual hosts above). [Paul] deluded the minds of his listeners temporarily so that he could establish truth and make it grow. In the same way the venerable Xuzhik did this, delighting Vehdenschapuh for the moment with false statements, so that what he longed to accomplish might indeed be done as he wished.

As for the *ambarapet*, Vehdenschapuh, he felt his meeting with the Xuzhik was [a favor] of the gods. Seeing that the [180] man was adept in everything, [Vehdenschapuh] esteemed him yet more as loyal and suitable for the task he had embarked upon. Consequently, he did not permit the man to quit his side for a moment, day or night, but kept him with him in great honor and affection. [Vehdenschapuh] confided to him the king's plan and the needs of the work he was going to do. For as has been said above, God was seeing to matters according to His will, for the destruction and embarrassment of the ranks of the impious and to the benefit and glory of His blessed Church [g95]. The word of the holy Spirit was fulfilled which said: "They made a plan, but not mine," and the psalmist who said: "They made a plan but were unable to realize it [Isaiah 30, 1; Psalms 20,12]."

Then the venerable Xuzhik pretended to excuse himself saying that his needs would take him elsewhere, and he entreated Vehdenshapuh to bid him farewell. Thereby hoping to put off the *ambarapet*'s plan, he revealed himself as yet more trustworthy, realizing through the influence of the holy Spirit that God would not allow [Vehdenshapuh] to let him go. Indeed, Vehdenshapuh refused even to listen to Xuzhik but rather said to him: "Would not someone as yourself, nourished in the faith and alive due to the glory of the fires, enthusiastically [181] remain with me to watch the destruction of infidel men condemned to death for killing the fire. And would you not rejoice?" When the venerable Xuzhik heard all of these words from the *ambarapet*, with great adoration he thanked Vehdenshapuh for the favor. But in his heart he glorified and blessed the most powerful giver of justice, God, Who caused the *ambarapet* to speak. [Xuzhik] begged [God] for a fragment of the saints' relics, and that he could go to the place where God's martyrs were to die, along with them. Such would be the disperser and disgracer of the king's order, and a symbol and share of the great heavenly treasure of the saints.

The venerable Xuzhik lifted the prayers of his heart to the lord God, beseeching Him on high to grant him the sense and breadth of the heart to be deserving to accurately inscribe in his mind all the questions asked by the tyrants as well as the replies and prayers of each one of the saints at the time of their death and passage to God, so that later he might accurately narrate [these events] in order, to be remembered by all believers until eternity. The Provider happily granted his prayers to narrate with a perpetually joyful heart to all the orthodox peoples everywhere [what took place], to the amazement [of all] and the glorification of Christ's name.

[182] 55. Now at first Vehdenshapuh did not consider it proper to reveal to the Xuzhik what he planned to do with the blessed priests, saying instead: "I am taking them to Hyrcania, where I shall set them free." That day they travelled until they came to a village named Rhewan some six *hrasax* or more distant from Niwshapuh (or more, according Iranian standards), where they stopped until the morning watch. At that time they hurriedly arose, and without letting anyone from the village or even all of the people in their party know, (with the exception of the venerable Xuzhik and the impious executioners by whom the saints were to be killed at the king's order), [those participating] secretly and silently left the village. The executioners [g96] took the saints and travelled the entire remaining portion of the night through an untouched desert far from the village, a distance of perhaps one Iranian *hrasax*, or more. At dawn they reached a rocky, sandy valley to which no herdsman came, and through which no traveller ever passed, since there was no road to it.

Chairs were placed for the three princes, and they sat: the *ambarapet*, Vehdenshapuh; Jnikan, the court *maypet*; and Movan, the *anderjapet*. The venerable Xuzhik raised his thoughts to the Creator of all.

[183] Having brought the blessed champions to the *atean*, Vehdenshapuh said to them: "You have worked numerous, countless evils, and are responsible for the deaths of many Aryans. If you were the cause of death for merely two or three people, that would be great enough and you would not deserve to live. [But you were guilty of the deaths] of such people of a great land as Armenia is, and furthermore a huge number of Aryans died there. You are responsible for all of this, and all of it was done by you and with your counsel. Despite your grave crimes and condemnation to death, the king of kings has done you a great kindness, for he ordered us, saying: 'Should they consent to worship the sun and fire, and accept our faith, I will excuse the death-penalty, I will send the bound nobles back to Armenia, and give to each *tanuterut'iwn*, *gah* and *patiw*.' Remember and keep in mind the large number of captives in prison, and willingly and enthusiastically accept the king of king's command; so that, just as you were the cause [of death] for many Aryans, you may be the cause of life for many. But should you not accept it, and persist in the same foolishness, then you shall die, and [the king] will order them killed, and the gods will demand from your souls all the blood which you have shed and will shed." Vehdenshapuh and his comrades said all of these things to the saints.

[184] They ordered the venerable bishop Sahak to translate this for the blessed Yovsep', the blessed Ghewond and their other comrades, for none of the other saints except the blessed Sahak knew Persian. But the holy

bishop Sahak immediately responded to Denshapuh and to the others seated with him: "Do not ask me to say something to them which does not befit their hearing, for how can I say something to them which I myself find hateful and ridiculous. For I know that as soon as they hear it, they will all deride both you and the sender. Do as you please, but do not procrastinate by speaking futile words and [relaying] vain messages to us."

Denshapuh and the others became enraged and said to the saints: "You will inform them. Let us know their words and wishes." The holy bishop briefly informed his blessed [g97] comrades of the words and the king's message, and as soon as the saints heard them, they began to loudly jeer. When the impious princes saw this, they became yet more angered. However, the blessed *kat'oghikos* Yovsep' replied: "That question was put to us in the *atean* at court, before the *hazarapet* of the Aryans, Mihrnerseh. He heard our response and wishes and informed the king. We all have the same responses and wishes as then and have not altered them, as though we thoughtlessly and foolishly said them and now, having become well, seek asylum as guilty people. As this [185] sole plan and matter has grown in our hearts day by day, why today should we be less fervent about the good deed we accomplished than yesterday? We have resolved to live or die together with the same faith we now have. As for the king's order you mentioned, that 'should you agree to worship the sun, you and the noble folk in bondage, shall live, but if you stubbornly refuse, you will die and we shall order them killed'—God forbid that we should apostasize the truth and serve falsely-named gods, which are not gods at all. Let it not happen that through our apostasy anyone of the believing captives be released and fall into eternally unbreakable bonds. They are now, more than us, beseeching God for our death for God, than for our lives with apostasy. Too bad it is not possible for you to know through prophecy the extent to which you seem to us mindless and lost because of that message you have brought us by the king's order, and that we consider you and the one who sent you, the king, more pitiful than all the wretches of mankind. But do as you please, right away, or whenever you choose."

When the blessed *kat'oghikos* Yovsep' had said this, Vehdenshapuh and the loyal men with him became enraged, and [Vehdenshapuh] ordered the blessed Sahak to say to Yovsep': "Although we regard your enmity toward us as grave, which made you call us mindless and lost, we consider these personal insults as nothing compared to the worthless things you boldly [186] dared to say about the god-like king. But know that the destruction which you sought for yourselves you now have obtained, and that it is impossible for you to live. However, we must know the wishes and choice of each of the others, for our laws so dictate."

56. [Vehdenshapuh] ordered the blessed Sahak to tell them: "Do not listen to his foolish words, stand back from such senseless advice, and like a human, choose life over death. He who now dared to say such words deserving death [g98] is very sinful, unworthy of life. His bad deeds do not permit him to live. But as for you, although you are still somewhat guilty, if you would only submit to the king's wishes and worship the sun, he has ordered that your guilt is to be forgiven and you should be sent to your homes well and with honor."

Then Vehdenshapuh and the loyal men with him further commanded the blessed Sahak to say to the venerable man of God, Ghewond: "We have heard that no one is as knowledgeable in the Christian faith as you, and that as a result of your counsel the land of Armenia was ruined yet more. Now such a great and wise intellect must recognize the benevolence of the king of kings to [offer to] forgive the great amount of [187] guilt which you have, and to acquaint you with the true god. Now, just as you were a counselor, and many died from your actions, be now a counselor of life, and permit them and countless other individuals to live. Tell them to worship the sun and live, and you shall find so much honor from the king that you will be renowned in your land and among all peoples." The holy bishop Sahak patiently suffering and ridiculing, immediately translated all of these words of the *ambarapet* and his impious associates for the saints so that the impious ones would know through the saints' responses the will, desire and unshakable firmness of each one's faith.

The holy man of God, Ghewond, began to speak with saint Sahak alone, saying: "We must respond to their question just as the Savior responded to Pilate at court [*atean*]. Now so that you fearlessly inform them about the question of our demand, tell them, 'As for what you have heard about me, that I am knowledgeable about our faith [it is true], I have been the teacher of many people, [and] this should show you that I am at the age of discretion. As for your statement that I have good learning, as you yourselves testify, I have learned [all] from God and not from man. Today, out of mental fear and crazed humanity, should I change this and be lost? God forbid! I counter with the words: [188] 'What you preach you do not yourself apply [Romans 2, 21].' As for the honor and glory which you promise to give, God forbid that we should accept honor from mortal, earthen man, who is polluted by the worm and the grub, and whom the thief digs up and carries away. We cannot compare this to the glory and heavenly honor [granted] by the eternal right hand of the One on High, for neither Heaven nor earth nor what is precious therein, can compare. There is but one thing lacking from our blessed glorification, and that is the cup of death, which we hurry to drink as thirsty men. Let us drink quickly, and let us joyfully escape from this transitory diseased life. And do [g99] not attempt to prolong the senseless and damaging words of your king who is predestined to prison."

When the blessed man of God, Ghewond, had finished his reply, the holy presbyters Mushe and Arshen and the holy deacon K'ajaj beseeched the blessed bishop Sahak to say to the impious prince: "What our holy *vardapets* and spiritual fathers lord Yovsep' and lord Ghewond have said, is also our will and concern. Do quickly what you came here to do, and delay not. We ask that God grant us and find us deserving of eternal honor and the Heavenly Kingdom."

When Vehdeshapuh and his impious collaborators heard this they were transported with rage, and wanted to say other [189] false and futile words with the blessed champions, thinking that they could yet dislodge one person from this brigade of unshakable union. But this was impossible. They commenced forcing the holy bishop Sahak to translate what they wanted to say to the holy men. But the blessed bishop Sahak said to Vehdeshapuh and to their other accomplices: "To now, although I have agreed to familiarize you with what was said and to translate what you have said to the saints, I did not want to associate myself with either you or the obscene words of your king. For what use is there for rational men who still have their senses to hear your words, the words of a jail-bird, if indeed the ears or senses of such men could put up with it? On the contrary, [such talk] merely serves to acquaint you with the foolishness of your position, and [serves to] strengthen us in the unshakable truth of our confession, which was learned from God".

57. The three impious princes became yet more angered and were unable to tolerate hearing any more of what the saints had to say, as though they were doing the king an honor in the face of such hostility. Vehdeshapuh himself arose before his accomplices and personally struck the holy bishop Sahak with his sword, striking him on the shoulder and carrying the wound close to the waist. Struck by this blow, the holy bishop did not fall over to the ground, but rather stood up against a rock. And he began to say, as though from the mouths of all the saints: "We thank you Christ, for sharing with [190] us many times your life-giving lamb which cannot be consumed, offered in eternal sacrifice. And now that we are being sacrificed, accept all of your officiants humanely as worthy of entering your fragrant flock." The blessed bishop strengthened by the grace of the Almighty, spoke these words as though he were not at all wounded, although streams of blood gushed from the saint's wound.

They then commanded that the blessed *kat'oghhikos* Yovsep' [g100] be beheaded with a sword. When the executioners stripped the saint, he said: "Return, body of mine, to the earth, and to your rest, for the Lord has favored you." He was thus killed with the sword.

Then the impious princes commanded the executioners to strip the blessed Ghewond and to drag him on his shoulders over sharp rocky places. So they dragged him for long hours until the saint's entire body, his sides and shoulders were stripped bare of skin, and until the bones were stripped of flesh. This was because all the

Iranians said that the venerable man of God, Ghewond, was the chief advisor and cause of all of Vardan's actions and deeds which had been done in the land of Armenia. While some of the executioners were dragging the venerable Ghewond, others were cutting off the [191] heads of the blessed priests Mushe, Arshen, and the holy deacon K'ajaj. At the time of their deaths they said: "Lord Jesus, accept our souls."

Then the executioners who were dragging the blessed Ghewond pulled him with little breath remaining where the other saints had been killed, and there they beheaded the blessed one with a sword. At the time of his death, [Ghewond] said with a joyful sound; "I thank You Christ, Who, with much kindness aided and kept me from from the time of my childhood to reach this hour. You have made me worthy of the destiny of Your saints. Savior, I entrust my soul to Your care." There was still some life left in the blessed bishop Sahak. After killing all the others, [the executioners] cut off his head with a sword. In a failing voice he offered prayers, said "Amen," and gave up the ghost.

Thus did the six saints die on the twenty-seventh day of the month of Hrotic', in the sixteenth year of the reign of king Yazkert, in the land of Apar, close to the village of the mages named Rhewan. They were:

the blessed *kat'oghikos* Yovsep' from Vayoc' Jor,  
the blessed bishop Sahak from Rheshtunik',  
the blessed presbyter Arshen from Bagrewand,  
[192] the blessed man of God, Ghewond the presbyter, from Vanand,  
the blessed presbyter Mushe from Aghbak,  
and the holy deacon K'ajaj from Rheshtunik'.

Arshawir Kamsarakan asked the venerable Xuzhik for accurate information about these events, pressing him warmly, and we have truthfully written what he heard from him about the speeches of each of the deceased saints.

Then Vehdenshapuh and the other princes who were with him quit that place. Having selected nine men, they left them there armed with weapons. First and foremost among them (thanks to God's influence) was the venerable Xuzhik, whom Vehdenshapuh had selected and left there, beseeching him, and saying that he was fundamental and necessary [for carrying out] his order. [The Iranian princes] gave the [g101] guards this order: "Carefully guard the corpses for ten or more days, so that they will be devoured by the birds. Then toss the bones here and there, on the top of a mountain or into the caves of a deep valley." Do this before the royal caravan has passed. For perhaps, [Vehdenshapuh] said, one of the Christians, having been informed by someone, will come and find their bones, and take and distribute them to all [193] the Christians. Then we shall be condemned to death in the king's presence."

In accordance with the command of Denshapuh and the *anderjapet*, Movan and the *maypet*, Jnikan, the guards remained there. During this time the venerable Xuzhik was pondering by what stratagems God would show the man a way to be worthy of stealing the remains of the saints from the other guards. While the venerable man was in this turmoil of thought, suddenly that same day, in the evening, a great earthquake occurred at that place. Great explosions and frightful noises were heard from the abyss. A multitude of clouds massed and covered the land. Sounds of thunder and lightning made the mountains tremble. A column of light, resembling a rainbow, descended from the sky and enveloped the bodies of the martyrs. The guards fell to the ground, half-dead, no one knowing where his comrade was. Those who had tumbled to the ground were unable to stand erect, for the shaking of the great quake hurled them up from the ground. Thus, with their legs bent and their speech impeded, all of them were confounded. But the right hand of the Almighty preserved the venerable Xuzhik free from care. Joyfully he glorified God, realizing that now all the requests he had made for such a long time would certainly be fulfilled. After the entire night, the whole next [194] day as well as the second night until the hour of sunrise had passed in fear, the sounds of roaring from the abyss quieted, the thundering clouds were reduced, the earth stopped shaking and the flashes of lightning ceased. This

[earthquake] had taken place in an area only two *asparez* around the place. Now when the guards had somewhat recovered from the awful alarm of numbness, they had a mind to flee from the place. But because their hearts were smitten with terror, they were unable to stand on the ground. They could only look at each other's faces, unable to speak.

At the ninth hour of the second day, the venerable Xuzhik arose, as he wanted, and looking behind him, hobbling along, he fled from the place so that the others would be strengthened to stand up and depart after him. Those who saw the venerable Xuzhik limping away were brought to their senses by the danger, and hurried after him. Out of fear they did not dare to turn and look back at the place. They hastened after Vehdenschapuh and his associates. But the venerable Xuzhik separated from them and went off by another road [g102]. When the guards reached the princes, on the sixth day, they related all the disastrous events which had happened to them during the one day and two nights. When Denschapuh and those with him saw the color of their faces and heard about the frightful events, one by one, they were horrified and stupified for many hours. Taking counsel among themselves, they could not [195] come up with any stratagems, but could only attempt to keep the guards quiet so that they would tell no one at all, or inform anyone about the death of the priests or about such phenomenal signs. But as for [the princes] they were absorbed in incredulous thought as though plunged into senselessness. Denschapuh and Jnikan said to each other: "The deeds of the Christians are neither small nor insignificant. Rather, it is certain that the power of their faith and belief is great, while we, damaged by ignorance, will be lost and do not realize it."

But the venerable Xuzhik realized that God had reduced suspicions all around. Furthermore, he heard the princes' responses to the guards and realized that no one was concerned about the saints' bones. Thus he took with him ten other companions whose Christian faith he knew well, they took along pack animals and a square trunk for each of the saints, and they silently went at night to accomplish the matter. Having approached the site, they missed the place where the saints' bodies were, because the night was very dark. After working in one place they became dismayed, thinking themselves undeserving of finding the heavenly treasure. As they were moving about the area, perturbed, lo, suddenly something resembling a radiant eagle flew down from the sky and perched on the body of the blessed man of God, Ghewond. The place [196] was more illuminated than in daytime, and the body of each saint was clearly revealed. With joyous hearts, they worshipped the lord God, and then, setting to work, they placed each saint's body in a trunk, [each body] being clearly revealed to the venerable Xuzhik as though in writing. Such a sweet fragrance wafted from the saints' bodies that it delighted everyone's senses.

After quickly placing the trunks on the pack animals, they moved them to another place in the desert, about three Iranian *hrasaxs* distant. Seven days later, after the fear of the matter subsided, they separated the saints' bones from the fragrant bodies. Wrapping the bodies in linen cloth in a fitting manner, they buried them in the desert carefully. They brought the bones to the *shahastan* where they kept them secretly for many days among themselves. Then they quietly began to distribute them to some of the virtuous Christians in the caravan, who received them considering [the bones] to be a find of salvation for their souls and bodies. They were urgently pressed to return each [body] to its own land, to [g103] benefit the spiritual life of the families and the district. But the venerable Xuzhik first brought the first fruit of that God-given great treasure and presented it to the captive Armenian *naxarars*. As soon as they were worthy of this, they received this find of their salvation, and thereupon realized that God had visited them, and that at some time [197] they would be released from their bonds to see their own land, through the intercession of the saints' bones, in accordance with the words of the blessed man of God, Ghewond, who had counseled them of the grace they would receive from God on that night. And the words of the saint had been fulfilled in their time.

Thereafter that blessed man of God, the Xuzhik (whom I shall hereafter style "Xuzhik," as I am wearying of it) related [events] one by one to the captive *naxarars* of Armenia. No one had bothered to relate this miraculous man's name to us, but the Omniscent has recorded it and is keeping it for the day of the great visit,



and will generously reward him in accordance with his labors, with the joy of his name. [Xuzhik] spoke ceaselessly of the very great care and aid which the Almighty had bestowed upon him. He related how in Vardges, Christ had revealed the king's plan to him and had accompanied and encouraged him with hope: "He exalted me and made me trusted by the *hambarakpet* Denshapuh, to the point that he beseeched me and forcibly took me (because of Almighty God) to the coveted site of the saints' martyrdom. Everything is possible for him. He made me worthy of seeing everything I did not think I would see, and of hearing [the saints' speeches] one by one, [speeches] which I did not think myself deserving to hear. [I heard] the question of [198] the tyrants and the answers of the saints, one by one, their prayers, and I saw the death of each of them, and heard them. And now, behold, he has made me worthy of finding and bringing to you this great part of the remains of the heavenly treasury of the saints, a favor of the blessed Trinity. He caused the guards to flee in alarm with shame, he terrified the hearts of the unbelieving overseers, split asunder the king's mindless plan and raised aloft the name of His blessed Church." With such words of glory and joy the venerable merchant tirelessly related these things to all the believers in Christ. He was once a merchant [possessing] an earthly treasure, but suddenly became a merchant who, through his good deeds, became honored with the great heavenly treasure of the remains of the martyrs.

These same words were a comfort to the captive Armenian *naxarars* in their comings and goings, as they sat at home, when they arose, at celebrations and at the beginnings of the months. Relating them with insatiable delight, they cheered them up, renewing all the faltering thoughts of the listeners and confirming them in the faith of justice. This was especially true for Arshawir Kamsarakan, the lord of Arsharunik'. For him, every day, morning and night, the doctrine of the saints [199] and especially the words and spiritual advice of the blessed Ghewond, the replies of each of the saints to the question of their slayers, the prayers of each at the time of his death—all of this served as [Arshawir's] spiritual food and [g104] sweet meditation and he tirelessly repeated them together with psalms. We heard this many times from the marvellous Kamsarakan, and wrote it down with enthusiastic concern. For although we were not able to recall everything in order (because of our feeble-mindedness) nonetheless we were not careless to lazily delay and forget things.

58. King Yazkert entered Hyrcania with the entire mass of the nobility and the troops who were with him. They then permitted residents of the *shahastan* who were in Niwshapuh in accordance with Denshapuh's order, to free the children of the captive Armenian *naxarars* (who were in the fortress) and others who were with them to serve their needs and to let them go wherever they chose. When the venerable priests Xoren and Abraham heard this, they immediately went to Hyrcania and publicly fell before the *ambarapet*, Denshapuh, saying [200] in protest: "You took our spiritual lords and *vardapets* from Niwshapuh and departed. We wanted to accompany them, but you forcibly ordered us kept here under stringent guard until now. Should it be that you sent them permanently to a foreign country, do us a good turn and say so, so that we, too, can go there with them and not return. We are prepared to go and die there only to see them, and we hope we will be worthy. But if you killed them, be so kind as to issue the same order about us, for we regard such a death as honorable and exalted above all the glories and greatness of the world."

Vehdenshapuh heard these words from them and he and all the multitude of the assembly were amazed at the intrepid boldness of the men. [He] responded to the venerable men: "No one can show the route of your *vardapets*. But I shall ask the king of kings about you. He will determine what order I should be given about you." Going inside, Denshapuh related to king Yazkert all the words and requests of the venerable priests. The king gave this order: "If no one reveals damage they have done, and there is no accuser, then let them worship the sun and agree to honor the fire. Then they will receive very great honors from us and be sent back to their land. But if they do not accept our order, then they will be crippled and go to Asorestan to do *mshakut'iwn* along with the royal *mshaks*, and remain in service until the end of their lives." Denshapuh [201] related the king's command to the venerable presbyters Xoren and Abraham who, upon hearing it, responded as though in unison, saying: "We are prepared not only for crippling, but for flaying and death, for the name of Christ. And as [g105] for what you said about worshipping the sun, we are saddened and disturbed by your

crazed madness, and beseech God that he rouses you from the stupor of ignorance, so there is no question of our resembling you [by converting]. God forbid that we should abandon the Creator and worship the created."

When the princes heard such a fearless reply from the venerable priests, they implemented the king's orders. Having cut off the priests' ears, they had the priests taken to Asorestan to the district called Shap'ul, to remain there in service and to perform royal *mshakut'iwn*. When the believers in the land of Asorestan heard of the coming of these venerable men, they went before them with joy and honored them as though they were remains of the martyred saints. Indeed, they were really deserving of such exaltation. Furthermore, each person brought what equippage and goods he had and laid them at the feet of the venerable ones to take and be used for the spiritual needs of the salvation of each and his family. The venerable priests accepted a fitting portion of the believers' gifts and sent them to the captive Armenian *naxarars* [202] in the land of Apar. Each individual, with delight and great enthusiasm, beseeched the venerable ones to make him worthy of such a spiritual journey. The venerable priest Abraham, taking the gifts from the southern parts of Asorestan, took and offered them to the captive Armenian champions, in accordance with the needs of each. The Christians of the land did this many times in succession, while the venerable priest Abraham was for many years the courageous bearer of provisions taken from the giving believers of the land to the captive *naxarars* until their release to the land of Armenia. After the venerable priest Xoren had lived some years, he died there in Asorestan.

Now with the guarantee of the believers of the land (who had written to the court pledging their homes and goods in exchange for [Abraham's] service until the time of his death and courageously fulfilling what had been stipulated for him) the venerable man was released and went to Armenia. Without any doubt the man's visage was like that of an angel to the beholders. He was ordained to the order of the episcopacy of the land of Bznunik', taught many reforms to the people of the land, and died in good old age, holding the same office. May we also be worthy of our lord Jesus Christ to Whom glory forever. Amen.

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## Part Three

59. We shall record in order what transpired from the preceding part. In the seventeenth year of king Yazkert [A.D. 456] the Iberian/Georgian prince Ashusha (after spending an incalculable amount on each person and especially on the impious *hazarapet* Mihrnerseh) beseeched the court nobility, and convinced them after great effort, to get them to say to king Yazkert that he should be favored with the sons of the venerable champion Hmayeak of the Mamikonean *tohm* (whom Vasak, the treacherous prince of Siwnik', had taken from their *dayeaks* as the sons of people condemned to death and had taken to court to be killed). They were extremely young. Humane God, through the intercession of the holy blood of his fathers, persuaded the king to bestow upon Ashusha his great request, which was more unbelievable than all others, since [Ashusha] was a very dear and deserving man.

When Ashusha saw this and received the great gift from the king, he went into the palace and, in front of everyone fell to the ground, turning this way and that, and then hitting his head against the ground. Thus did he adore [him]. When the king and everyone in the palace observed this, they [204] were greatly astonished, wondering what the man was doing. The king asked him: "*Bdeshx* of Iberia, what is that new thing you are showing us today?" Ashusha replied: "Benevolent king, you have bestowed upon me a new favor which none of my comrades who serve you have ever received. Therefore it is fitting that I adore you with a new type of reverence, something you have never seen from your other servants." When the king and the entire multitude of the nobility heard such words from Ashusha, they praised the man greatly and were astounded [g107].

60. King Yazkert of Iran lived out the remainder of his life and died in P'arhssum [in A.D. 457] [*i P'arssum*. The editors, in note 2 p. 108 express doubt about this reading]. After him, his two sons [Hormizd III and Peroz] reigned, but they were at odds with each other. Going against each other in battle, the younger one killed the older one, and ruled himself. His name was Peroz. In the same year of his reign [A.D. 459] [Peroz] dispatched Yazatvshnasp, the son of his *dayeak* whom he was especially fond of, and commanded that the Armenian *naxarars* be freed from bondage and that stipends be allocated for them at Hrew. He said: "Let them remain there with the cavalry and do whatever work Yazatvshnasp's father, Ashtat, says and can observe them doing." Yazatvshnasp arrived and [205] gave them good news, saying: "The king of kings has forgiven your death-penalty, and has ordered you freed from your shackles. He has stipulated stipends for you at Hrew, and for your women, in your own land. He has ordered you to do work for the court, to listen to and obey everything that my father, Ashtat, orders you." When the Armenian *naxarars* heard all of Yazatvshnasp's words, they glorified God, Who cared about their souls and was their benefactor, and from Whom they with patience awaited yet other benefits, through the intercession of the remains of the saints.

When Yazatvshnasp saw the Armenian *naxarars* and gradually became familiar with them, he received them as if a God-given blessing, and [especially] liked Arshawir Kamsarakan, the way Johnathan liked David, and was always interceding favorably for the other Armenian *naxarars* as well. Then the Armenian *naxarars* were taken to Hrew and a stipend was allocated for each one of them. They were assembled under the care of Ashtat who put them into military service. God exalted them before the military commander of the brigade, clearly showing him their bravery and [also showing this] to all the citizens of Hrew and of the district. Furthermore, thanks to the right hand of God on High, many diverse types of medical healings were accomplished by the remains of the saints which the priests who were with them were secretly keeping. As a result, they earned the reputation of brave and miraculous men from [206] the military commander and from the entire district. The prince of Hrew, Hrew-shnomshapuh, greatly liked the captive Armenians and frequently wrote to the grandees at court and to their friends in the assembly about their bravery, good behavior and ability.

61. There were many who dared to investigate whether there was any physical weakening of the captives, and even were bold enough to ask. These were the people who, in the words of the Savior, having forgotten the beam in their own eyes, complacently and with conceit sought for the mote in the eyes of others. Having heard this, I tremble with horror. For, after observing the various torments they underwent voluntarily with the hopes of a portion of eternity [g108], and seeing the great duration of their patience (scorning greatness, considering authority as nothing, turning away from belongings, giving themselves up to death fearlessly, enduring bondage for a long time, bearing imprisonment and enmity, accepting dishonor rather than glory, suffering from hunger and thirst, loathing the goods of plenty, willingly accepting the condition of poverty, dishonoring ease and loving austerity), and the innumerable other types of severe privations which these men willingly suffered their bodies to withstand, I do not dare to not record any weakening of such individuals. Viewing them as possessing the integrity [207] of the blessed prophets and the holy Apostles, we who are filled with myriads of evils, who have not once recalled or even regretfully thought about our own faults, are unworthy to observe any human traits in them. There is but one truth and holiness, as was said: "I alone have overcome the world [John 16, 33]."

Some of the captive *naxarars*—whom we heard with our own ears—indeed resembled celestial beings on earth, with the bodies of angels. They set up a school for themselves and studied the testaments of the Church, impressing upon themselves through spiritual religion the virtuous behavior of hermits. They fearlessly performed the stipulated *gubgha* cannons and selected readings, ceaselessly doing this morning and evening in the corps, as though at home, sometimes openly and sometimes covertly. Bearing arms, they were inwardly worshipping; attacking the enemy, there were prayers in their hearts, and with the aid of the Almighty, they returned from each battle uninjured, victorious, and with renown. As for those who, because of age or because they were by nature dull and were unable to learn, nonetheless [these folk, too] were [208]

enthusiastic, willing and not complacent about lengthy praying and standing sleepless [during vigils]. One should have seen all of them, these sons of light and children of the Kingdom.

The same was true of the women whose husbands were the martyred champions, and of the other women whose husbands were in bondage in Hrew. With much modest virtue they urged one another on, each day dying of all kinds of diseases. In the words of the prophet, they were living martyrs. Though words are insufficient to describe it, one may definitely say that in their strict ascetic behavior they surpassed many men. The natural weakness of women's bodies became strengthened more than men's, and they became conquerors. These tender woman who were the daughters of *naxarars* and the wives of *awags*, instead of the finest wheat flour, now ate millet; instead of clear wine, they now drank water from a laddle; instead of clothing woven with gold, they now wore coarse wool [g109]; and instead of sleeping on diverse sorts of [comfortable] beds, they now slept on beds of dry brushwood, spread out on the floor. Those who previously persisted in sleeping, now resembled celestial beings, and were sleepless. They did not anoint themselves with oil. They did not arrange the hair on their heads with the comb. And [those traits] which are impossible for women to overcome—talking too much and letting their eyes dart about behind the veil...frequently [209] and they made their tongues reduce superfluous talk [The editors, p. 110 n.6 believe several words are missing].

Most merciful God, seeing the entreaties and labors of both men and women, recalled the heroism of saint Vardan and all who were united with him, as well as the intercession of the priests of God who had been martyred, and generously bestowed upon the captives the favor of returning to the land of Armenia. They each returned to their *tuns* in the sixth year of Peroz' reign [A.D. 464/65], and having lived the life stipulated for each by the Lord, they died and were buried in the tombs of their fathers, in peace, as God willed it, all of them blessed by the holy *kat'oghikos* Giwt

62. For after the death of the blessed *kat'oghikos* Yovsep', lord Melite (who was from the *azg* of Manazkertec'ik' ) succeeded to the *kat'oghikosate* of the land of Armenia. He in turn was succeeded by lord Movses who was from the same *azg*. After this, according to God's providence, lord Giwt (who was from the village of Arahez in the district of Tayk') succeeded to the *kat'oghikosate* of the land of Armenia [Giw't I Ot'msets'i, 461-478]. He was a man filled with much learning, especially in the Greek language, with [the knowledge of] rhetorical speaking, and copious doctrine.

[210] The wives of men who had been martyred or were in captivity at court, despite the difficulties they faced, nonetheless carefully taught and counseled the young sons of the men who had been martyred with Vardan, be they from the Mamikonean *tohm*, the Kamsarakan *tohm*, or from other *azgs*. They did this not as careless, useless women, but as valiant men might, being full of concern for the beneficial and magnificent training of the lads, This was especially true of the wife of the martyr Hmayeak Mamikonean (saint Vardan's brother) who was a woman renowned and intellectually better than all the women in the land of Armenia. She nourished and counseled her sons in the land of Iberia, in the *tun* of the *bdeshx* of Iberia, Ashusha. These were the children whom the Iberian *bdeshx* Ashusha had requested and received from the king of Iran, Yazkert, as was mentioned [g110] above. He took them and gave them to their mother, whose name was Juik. Juik's sister, whose name was Anushvrham, was married to Ashusha, the *bdeshx* of Iberia. The lads who were nourished and schooled there became proficient in everything and renowned. While still in their childhood they seemed capable and marvellous. The first was named Vahan, the second, [211] Vasak, and the third, Artashes. But they also had yet another younger brother, named Vard, who was still a boy and was staying with his *dayeaks* in Tayk'.

63. One should have seen those senseless, harmful, useless, bad and cowardly men who at the time managed to stay in their own *tuns*, like thieves, having purchased [their] *tanuterut'iwn* from the Iranians, unworthily through apostasy and not ruling with piety as worthy folk. Some of them wandered in apostasy among the

mountain brigands. Some jokingly purchased [images of] gods and outraged both the gods and their stupid merchants. [Such people were] less than real men and were from the line of worthless *tohms*. One then could have seen goodness having left the land of Armenia, wisdom lost, bravery dead and gone, and Christianity concealed. If before, in the army, the brave forces of Armenia were more prominent than any other, their military commanders renowned and victorious, now they were the ridicule and joke of all. Even king Peroz openly insulted them before the entire assembly on occasion, saying: "Of all the peoples under my authority [up to now] the least useful and the worst brigade has been the Syrian, but the Armenian is even worse than the Syrian." That information [212] merited tears and laments.

Such useless princes of the time watched the daily progress of the sons of the *azg* of the martyred Mamikoneans who were endowed [with abilities] not through the gifts of man but rather with the aid of heavenly providence, and with the intercession of the holy blood of their ancestors (which they willingly shed for the blessed Church of Armenia). [The Mamikonean youths] lived fearlessly among these so-called princes of Armenia, as though in the midst of enemies. Although they were scorned out of jealousy, nonetheless, they were better than any of the others, renowned in [giving] counsel, intelligent and learned. In archery, they hit their target and in good form; at the hunt, they moved nimbly and were the first to slaughter, having dexterity in both hands, correct and graceful in everything. Those who had many servants were importuning them, the non-servants, for gifts, always requesting one or another type of meat from the hunts, or some other honorable and expensive article, from each land. The suppers of all the *tanuters* of Armenia were embellished by them. Strangers and family adorned all the houses [g111] with them. Resembling [the Mamikonean youths] in striving to [213] advance quickly, were the sons of the venerable Arshawir Kamsarakan, the lord of Arsharunik' who were related [to the Mamikoneans] through the daughter of the martyr Vardan. They strived to counsel and train in accordance with their wisdom and art.

The senior son of the blessed Hmayeak, whose name was Vahan, was especially attentive to accomplishing such good things, and enthusiastically encouraged it. He was an intelligent man, benevolent, and of sound judgement. Whatever job he undertook, the Lord aided him and strengthened his hand. Even the Iranian officials who came from the court liked and honored him (because of God's support) even though he did not want it. In the presence of the Iranian king they were constantly praising the man's goodness. Even king Peroz himself, once he was thoroughly acquainted with [Vahan], revered and praised him in front of all of them, and regarded him as deserving of honor. However, although [Peroz] thought about honoring [Vahan] in accordance with his wisdom and bravery, nonetheless, recalling the affairs and [214] deeds of [Vahan's] fathers and ancestors, and how they had frequently troubled them with resistance and battle, he delayed and said nothing about giving them deserving honor. This was especially true since [the shah] was constantly hearing the slander of those jealous [beings] who in this time of troubles were called the *tanuters* of Armenia, who were extremely frightened about the growing advancement of Vahan Mamikonean. [Peroz] was doubtful about disheartening the above [*tanuters*], the unworthy arrogant ones.

But, surprisingly, there were some worthy men in those times, such as the good man Babik Siwnik' or the wonderful Arhnaq Amatuni, and others like them [who had fled] from the soul-killing, fanatical king and from the impious princes of the time and had concealed themselves in the caverns of rocks or in dense places in the forests, like rabbits [protecting themselves] from the swoop of devouring eagles. They considered it better to die with forbearance in the Christian faith, than motivated by lust for glory, apostasize and be lost. [215] In accordance with the word of the Bible, they considered it better to be insulted because of Christ than to temporarily be immersed in the futile glories of the world, yet inherit eternal torment. They saw the fire of impiety raised like the fire of the furnace of Babylon, and there was no one to extinguish it. They had assembled by the blessed patriarch of Armenia, Giwt, who never ceased to deplore the error of the ash-lovers, and who silently sought for ways [g112] of devising expediences for them, sometimes to flee to a foreign [place], sometimes in connection with helping to rebell. They secretly sent messengers to the Byzantine

emperor Leo [I? 457-74] once, then twice, yet although he agreed and wanted to help, he delayed and the plans were dashed.

64. Thereafter the blessed *kat'oghikos* of Armenia, Giwt, was unable to restrain himself and began openly to instigate rancor against the impious apostates, while loving and honoring the side of the suffering believers. He especially held in contempt and scorned Gadishoy Maxaz, who was the military commander of the entire class of the impious, and the one who encouraged them. [Gadishoy], unable [216] to bear the scorn of the blessed *kat'oghikos* of Armenia, Giwt, fabricated a myriad of inimical words, and complained about him to Peroz, the king of Iran, saying: "[Giwt] summons to himself those people who think to accept your faith, like it, and want to implement the command of your will. He deceives some with gifts, and others, with sweet words, and turns them away from these things. For many people have come to me and consented to hold your faith. But [Giwt] then calls them to himself, and, with pretexts, gets them to abandon [that faith] and to ridicule it. Furthermore, he hates and reviles those of us who love you, worship the sun and the fire, and serve your wishes. He himself communicates with the emperor and subordinates himself to him and to the grandees at his court with precious gifts." And he said many other things as he chose in a similarly hostile vein.

When the Iranian king Peroz heard such accusations from Gadishoy Maxaz, he became enraged and commanded that the blessed *kat'oghikos* of Armenia come to court and respond to the accuser's charges. Giwt, the venerable *kat'oghikos* of Armenia, willingly and enthusiastically went to court and appeared before the court *awags*. Power from On High dignified this blessed man, and everyone viewed his face as that of an angel. With great care the pagans reverentially honored him. [217] Other Christians, the bishop of Ctesiphon, Khuzistan, and Ray, and all the priests and deacons in those parts, trembled at the blessed man as though he were a prophet of the lord God.

When king Peroz learned about the blessed Giwt's arrival, he sent Yazatvshnasp (the son of Ashtat, from the Mihran *tun*) to him with each of Maxaz' accusations. Replying to the king's words, the blessed *kat'oghikos* Giwt said: "Everything that Maxaz has told you about me is not false. Rather, there are things which are true, and others which are not the complete truth. For liking Christianity and whoever is a Christian is not something new which I have chosen to do at present, but something I have done from my childhood on. And I loathe everyone who strays from the truth. I have attempted without cease [g113] to dissuade all who would stray from the truth and travel an incorrect path [not to do so] and have tried to convince them by forceful means if possible, by entreaty, or by [giving] goods, so that such people would not be hopelessly lost. As for what they have told you, regarding his comings and goings to Byzantium the affair is not as [Gadishoy] says or thinks, for that is false. Rather, we have received our schooling in knowledge and understanding of wisdom in the land of Byzantium and I have many acquaintances [218] and classmates there. Furthermore, the cloth for the rainment we use we purchase there, for as it is available in no other land, we are obliged by the needs of the times to buy it there. And as regards the homage of service, our very faith commands us to requite proper and worthy lords."

When the messenger had taken all of these words [to Peroz] the king immediately recognized that the holy man's words were accurate and sensible, and that whatever Maxaz had said about him had been false and the result of a grudge. This was because God, out of pleasure with the blessed man, had made the king heed his words. However, so that it would not appear to the Christians that the rule of his faith was being weakened, [Peroz] abided Maxaz' words in silence and did not ask anything troublesome. But he sent [the following message] to the venerable *kat'oghikos* Giwt: "To the present, you have held your authority without my order. Servants were the ones who gave you such a great occupation, though you have no assurance from me. However, now, if you do as I wish, adopt my faith and worship the sun, that position will be yours, for your *azg* or whomever you wish. I will give a rescript in perpetuity to that effect and will dispatch you to Armenia with such honor that no Armenian will ever have its equal in honor or splendor [219] from our court. But

should you stubbornly refuse to do as I wish, I will remove you from the episcopacy and from your position. And you will return to your *tun* and your land in disgrace and dishonor."

The venerable man of God, the *kat'oghikos* of Armenia, Giwt, filled with the power of the holy Spirit, replied to the court messenger: "I would prefer to respond to such words personally, in the king's presence. For you cannot and dare not courageously relate to the king everything that you hear from my mouth in full." The messenger replied to the saint: "Kings have the license to say what is true information between the two sides [in a dispute]. What the messengers hear, they do not dare not to relate." The blessed man of God answered as follows: "Tell the king that I am pleased and willing regarding what he said about since I hold my office not from him but from his servants, either he or one of the servants who gave it to me might [g114] take it from me. For, having lived with the cares of the world in my soul and in privations, I [will] occupy myself with prayer. But as for the episcopal ordination which you say you will take from me, no king or prince can take this [220] honor of ordination away from me, only death can take it. [The king] does not dare, because he cannot do it. I in no way fear the mortal man [who purports] to give this honor to me or take it away. As for your order that I take your faith (for which you promise to give me honors and presents) [I am aware that] there is no earthly being possessing such great honor or powerful authority as you. Regarding the useless and loathesome faith that you hold: in my eyes you, principally, the king, and all the people who hold that faith, are dead, not living beings. I regard your honor and glory as insults, the ridicule and jokes of children."

When the messenger heard such words from the blessed *kat'oghikos* of Armenia, Giwt, he said to the venerable one: "Indeed, if you truly persist with those words, then you were right in what you said, that I would not dare to take your words to the king. You were right, because no one has ever delivered such insolent words before the man, who is king. Try to change your words to be prudent." The blessed man replied: "Do you see? You resist the command of God, and yet do not fear! For you yourself said that whoever breaks the king's command, dishonors God. And you also said that the laws of kings [state] that a messenger should not dare to [221] add to or subtract from what the sender says. So go now and say what you heard from me. For it is impossible for me to think or speak otherwise."

The messenger went into the king's presence and spoke to the king as follows: "Without your order, I dare not boldly repeat the man's words before you." The king commanded him to speak out forthrightly, without fear, and to relate everything he had heard. So one by one he related all of the words of Giwt, the man of God. When the king heard all the bold words of Giwt, he was transported with rage, and wanted to give a severe order. But suddenly he stopped himself for a moment and was quiet. Then he began to speak and said: "No. It is not possible. Otherwise he would get what he wants. I will not permit the Christians to kiss his shackles, or worship his bones, as is [their] custom. For I have heard regarding their worship that they do not honor the living as much as the dead. But tell him, that I will not permit him to attain that honor which he hoped to extract from me by making me furious. [Tell him:] 'Go and live wherever you like, but you are removed from the office of the *kat'oghikos*ate. It is no longer yours'" [g115]. br>

[222] When Giwt, the blessed *kat'oghikos* of Armenia heard this, part of him rejoiced, while the other part was saddened to death. He rejoiced upon hearing that he had been removed from office, to rest from the cares of the world. But he was unconsolably disturbed and saddened when he heard that the king had ordered for him neither shackles nor death (which for a long time he had longed to be worthy of), and that he would not attain the object of his desire.

Thereafter, by his own choice the holy *kat'oghikos* of Armenia, Giwt, remained at court. With much boldness he was honored not only by the priests and the Christians, but even more so by the pagans, who found a cure for each of their diseases from the saint's prayers. Others of the Christians in those parts were desirous of obtaining ordination from the blessed right hand of this man of God. He ordained some into the episcopacy, while establishing many others in the rank of priest. So it was, thusly honored by all, with joyous splendor

[Giw]t said farewell to go to the land of Armenia. Blessing them all, he entrusted them to God, and set off on the road to the land of Armenia. Having lived with greater glory than before in Armenia, he died in [223] deep old age and was peacefully placed in the tomb of his fathers in the village called Odmsu *geogh* in the district of Vanand. With a blessing, he left the entire people to the blessed Church of Armenia.

65. Gadishoy Maghxaz came from the court and assembled around him the groups of apostates. Although they had apostasized for the transitory gloomy joy of life, nonetheless when they saw Vahan Mamikonean so filled with such noticeable growth in goodness, their dye faded and their blossom withered. They sought some pretexts to ruin him and his brothers. They informed the court grandees as well as the one who was king, that there was no way [Vahan] could remain in Armenia without causing rebellion. They reminded the Aryans about [Vahan's] ancestors, one by one, [asking] which of them had not disturbed the Aryan world, had not wrought very great damage and death. Just as it was in the past, they said, so he will raise the same rebellion against you. Those who heard these vengeful words from the constant slanderers, doubted the news, and, looking at the man's ability and wisdom, they were saddened, out of affection [for Vahan].

[224] Vahan, seeing that his detractors had stirred up such a storm around him, and realizing that he would never be able to still the wicked spiteful talk, unable to bear the constant slander, went to court, and weakened in the faith. He came back to Armenia but still was unable to stop the mouths of the slanderers. For he hated anyone who did not know how to say something correctly in the assembly before his prince [g116], and he criticized those who did not know how to shoot, at the hunt or at target-practise. [The slanderers said:] "If we sit idly by, he will put us all to nought." Whenever someone was unable to perform a court assignment because of imprudence, he would lay the blame [on Vahan]. They would say: "He is in charge of everything in the affair, and does not allow anyone else to do it or profit from it." [Vahan] had an associate whose name was Vriw, undistinguished by *azg* and untried at things, the son of a Syrian man. He especially resembled the Syrians in excessive and idle chatter. [Vriw], unable to perform a court assignment went before king Peroz and blamed Vahan, saying: "In no way did he permit me to approach the work of gold-mining. Having taken [225] to himself all of the gold in the land, he now plans to go the emperor and/or to the land of the Huns, give them gold, request a brigade, and rebel."

When the wise Vahan heard all of these accusations about himself, he quickly took much gold and went to court. King Peroz, hearing how quickly Vahan had arrived, was astonished, and said: "Such a speedy arrival by Vahan goes contrary to what Vriw was saying, especially since [Vahan] has brought something along in addition." In the king's presence [Vahan] informed Peroz that he had indeed brought something with him. When [Peroz] heard from Vahan the large amount of gold he had brought, he was greatly delighted. Then [Peroz] had Vriw say in Vahan's presence what he had said before, about him. When Vahan heard all that Vriw said, he replied before the king, saying: "I too know I am stupid, as Vriw has demonstrated for you. But I am not blind, for I have seen the might of the Aryans. That might has struck severe terror into many rebellious peoples, and, having subdued them, now holds them. Now he claims that I want to rebel, something he himself should know. For there is no servant to be found with me who cooks for me, and there are not two or three youths whom I rule over like a lord, so that they serve me out of fear. [226] That is the strength of my brigade. But if there were some oppression I felt from you, and wanted to go to some foreign country and disappear, then why would I bring here such a quantity of gold, enough to provide me with an ample and large stipend for the rest of my life (even if I were to live a long time), and ten others along with me? Nor are any of your *ostikans* placed above me to compel me to bring such quantity of gold here. But I know you are tiring: You can do as you wish, let me live, or exalt me at once, as you chose."

When king Peroz and all the nobility heard such words [g117] of wisdom from Vahan, they all vindicated his word over Vriw's. Vahan left the *atean* vindicated while Vriw, the son of the Syrian, departed humiliated and reviled. Bidding farewell to the court, Vahan came to the land of Armenia with exaltation and great splendor.



But there was no peace of mind [for Vahan]. Every day he worried about the bad name of apostasy he bore (as his martyred fathers did, on pretexts, and not in truth), and even more that he had returned from court in splendor. He had doubts within himself that perhaps, deluded by the glories [227] of this world, he might forget his awe for the next world, and be harmed. With this concern ever raging his mind, he familiarized his intimate friends with his worry, and was looking for some strategem. He ceaselessly asked Christ the Savior to grant him a favorable hour, saying to himself: "Through you, lord God, everything is always possible. Nothing can weaken You. Lord, truly be mine. Grant me time for confession of [re]conversion, and teach me to do Your will, for You are my God."

66. While Vahan was in a state of confusion with such mental anguish, suddenly there was tumultuous agitation in the land of Iberia/Georgia, for [king] Vaxt'ang [fl. ca. 446-522] had slain the impious *bdeshx* Vazgen in the twenty-fifth year of the reign of king Peroz [482; P'arpec'i regards 457 rather than 459 as the first year of Peroz' reign]. This was heard by people from the land of Armenia, many of whom were fighting that year in Aghbania/Aghuania [against] rebel fortress-guards. The military oommander of them all was Zarmihr Hazarawuzt, while the *marzpan* of Armenia [then] was Atrvnashp Yozmandean. The Christian Armenian men who were fighting that year there, were more afflicted by the insults and envy of the least of the Armenian princes (who at ths time had grown boastfully arrogant [228] through their apostasy), than by the tyranny of the deeds of the Iranian military commanders. When [the Armenian Christians] heard about the rebellion of Iberia's king, they rejoiced with delighted hearts. For they had received news that the king of Iberia had said: "I will not permit anyone to see military action. Rather I will bring forth such a multitude of the Huns that the Iranian forces will be unable to resist." The lovers of Christ were fortified by such news, and personally expected benefit and a goodly visit from On High. But they were afraid that perhaps the Iranian military commanders would take the Armenian brigade and go to the Gate [of the Honk'].

But Christ spared them [the actualization] of such doubts, and they came to Armenia, to the district of Shirak, the plain where the *marzpan* of Armenia, Atrvshnasp Yozmandean and the *hazarapet* of Armenia, Vehvehnam, dwelled. Here consultations took place among some of the Armenian *naxarars* who knew that Vahan Mamikonean had been saddened and confused for a long while because of being labelled a magian. They said: "This hour of salvation is quite appropriate both for him and for us [g118]. [229] For him, it would save him from his pangs of conscience, while it would free us from the constant suspicions and continual assaults of oppressive envy of those whom we are forced to serve. The king of Iberia/Georgia, Vaxt'ang, is very courageous. Who knows, most compassionate God may look upon our difficulties and aid us, and we, together with the Iberians, may perhaps be able to tire out the Iranians a little." A few of the Armenian *naxarars* were thinking this, and others listened to the plan. As though at God's direction, those who heeded the idea all united, willingly and enthusiastically.

Taking courage one night, they revealed their intentions to Vahan Mamikonean. When he heard it, he said to them all: "Some though not all of those involved in this plan know how dangerously tormented I have been every hour because of the false name which I hatefully bear. For when evening approaches, I am in doubt until morning, yet when morning comes, I feel fright until evening, thinking about what would happen if I should suddenly and unexpectedly die and leave this world bearing such a name. Then I wish—and it would have been preferable to me—that my mother never brought me into this world. Hoping to find some release from my conscience which bothers me, I ceaselessly entreat God. But I am unable and dare not unite with the plan you have thought up, and tell you that your [230] thinking is good, and to proceed. For I know well the force and severity of the Aryans, and the weakness and duplicity of the Byzantines, and I also know you through experience, [and] how you swore oaths to our fathers and then broke them. As for what you said about the king of Iberia/Georgia and the Huns, the Iberians are an especially frivolous people and possess few cavalymen; while who knows about the Huns—since they are not involved, who knows if they will agree to show up? But more than anything else, I am worried about you, because you are false and unreliable people. If you ask me, and accept what I advise, then abandon what you are saying, and beseech God alone (Who can

do anything He wants, easily) to find a resolution of the matter. But do not tire me out with your vain and useless plans."

When the Armenian *naxarars* heard all of these words from Vahan Mamikonean, they gave a united reply: "Everything that you said, as befits your wisdom, is fully correct and true. But we are placing our hopes not on the Byzantines or the Huns, but primarily on the mercy of God, through the intercession of saint Gregory and through the death of [our] ancestors who, by their martyrdom pleased Christ the Savior. We also [place our hopes] on our own deaths, for we consider it [231] better to die in one hour than to see daily the insults and demolition of the Church and Christianity" [g119].

When Vahan Mamikonean and his brave brother, Vasak, heard the mention of death, they were so encouraged and strengthened and filled with the grace of the holy Spirit, that they were persuaded. Vahan Mamikonean began speaking: "You know that my brother, Vard, is at court. I know that when the Iranians learn of our plan, they will tie him up and cause him grief. But I prefer death than to live like this in apostasy. I accept your word that you can do it. May the Omniscient see my [re]conversion and realize that my turn has been made with my entire heart. May He give me a good sign and return my beloved brother Vard to me, healthy. May He allow me to see him with my own eyes and rejoice. And then let Him work His pleasure regarding me, whatever seems [fitting] in His eyes."

Having said this all of them rose together, Christians and apostates, and after praying they requested a holy Gospel. Then the holy priest, At'ik, came forward. He was from the prominent village called Bjni, and had been with them in the army, an eloquent speaker and one able to keep a secret. Bringing [232] forth a blessed Gospel, all of them hailed it. Placing their hands upon it, each of them said: "Whoever confesses the faith which the Savior of all and lord Jesus Christ taught and wrote in this [Gospel], and whoever confesses the Son of man, may [Christ] take him before His Father and have him inherit heavenly goodness. And whoever erroneously apostasizes this faith and treacherously breaks his oath [made] on the Gospel, and whoever denies the Son of man, may [Christ] remove him to the outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth." Thus, having vowed that night, having confirmed their faith in Christ, they bade each other farewell, and each went to his lodging to rest.

67. A certain one of the Armenian *naxarars*, named Varaz-shapuh, from the Amatunik' *tohm*, separated from the plan of unity (just as Judas was rejected from the host of blessed Apostles) and that very night went and told the *marzpan* and everyone else about the plan of unity, the oath on the Gospel, and the words of all the Armenian *naxarars*. When this was heard by the *marzpan*, Atrvshnasp, the other Iranians, and the company of Armenian apostates, they were dismayed and terrified, and did not sleep the remainder of the night, out of fear. [233] When morning arrived, they left the place where they had been and went and encamped close to the wall of the fortress called Ani. They remained there that day, advisors of the deception and the *marzpan* with doubts accurately learning about the disaster from others, and that [the rebellion] was to take place the next day. That night the *marzpan*, the *hazarapet*, and others allied with them each mounted their horses and fled. When the Armenian *naxarars* found out about this, they went after [g120] the fugitives. But because the *marzpan* and the *hazarapet* were travelling with informed guides, they did not flee by direct roads but by different ones, and so managed to escape to the fortress of Artashat. The Armenian *naxarars* were unable to catch up with them. However they seized the equipment of all the Iranians on the road, and they arrested Gadisoy Maxaz, whom they took along with them. Having arrived at Duin, they went and besieged the fortress of Artashat. But the *marzpan* and the *hazarapet* left the fortress secretly at night and fled to the Atrpatakan region. There was a *sepuh* from Urc named Varaznerseh, the son of Koght'ek, prince of Urc, who had sworn the oath along with the Armenian *naxarars*, but then broke the holy vow. He went and laid waste the *shahastan* of Brhnavezh, took all the goods of the *shahastan* and fortified himself in the fortress called Sagray fortress, which was a secure fortress in their principality.

[234] Now some of the impious Armenian *naxarars* who were advising Armenia's *marzpan*, Atrvshnasp, said: "The king of Iberia/Georgia is rebelling and wants to bring out the Huns, but as yet, he has not done so. Furthermore, the emperor is sending a brigade to the Armenians, but it has not arrived yet. They themselves are not yet as well organized as they should be. If you quickly go against them now, you will easily and lightly accomplish a very great deed, and having received a good name, both you and we shall receive from the king of kings honors and many gifts. However, should you lazily delay, we fear that perhaps they themselves might become stronger and/or receive help from elsewhere. [In that case] we do not know how the matter will end. Perhaps we will be exhausted and regret it."

This statement pleased the *marzpan* and all of the people with him. Taking a brigade from Atrpatakan, and from the *marzpan* of Koprik', and the Katshac' brigade which was in those areas, he quickly reached the banks of the Arax River, [the borders of] the land of Armenia. They wanted to cross over to the village called Naxchawan, on the border of Siwnik'.

[235] 68. Sahak, lord of the Bagratunik', was informed of this. At that time the Armenians and Vahan, the general of Armenia, had appointed him the *marzpan* of Armenia. *Aspet* Sahak received the office of *marzpan* while Vahan received the office of the lordship of the Mamikoneans and the *sparapetut'iwn* of Armenia, first, clearly from orders from On High, and secondly from the Armenian people. They heard about the arrival of the Iranian brigade. Seeing that their troops were still very disorganized and unprepared, they thought for a moment about going to secure places in the district of Tayk'. But remembering the all-conquering aid of God, to Whom they turned, they said: "Victory is not determined by numbers or the lack of them, but rather by [God's] hand. This is especially true of our work, since we look to His aid completely. Now we must think of nothing else, but to quickly go against them [g121] and to look to the Savior of all for the strength of victory." Inspired by God, *marzpan* Sahak, the *sparapet* of Armenia, Vahan Mamikonean, and some of the other *naxarars* decided to remain there at the *ostan*, to encourage with hope those who went out first, and to frighten and break the hearts of the side of the impious. The following men then organized for war [236]:

Babgen Siwni, who was then named prince of the Siwnik' lordship,  
Vasak, the most goodly brave *sepuh* of the Mamikoneans, brother of *sparapet* Vahan,  
Garjoyl Maghxaz,  
and the two sons of the venerable Arshawir Kamsarakan: Nerseh, lord of Shirak, and his brother Hrahat,  
two men from the Gnunik' *tohm*: Atom, prince of the Gnunik', and his brother Arhastom,

and a brigade with them numbering 400 men in all.

Entering a church, they worshipped the lord God, the creator and strengthener of all. They requested that He send them as aid the asceticism of the blessed champion Gregory, all the holy saints and the modern Christ-loving champions of Armenia, as well as the power of the holy Cross. The Savior Christ, moved by the love of mankind, considered their worthy request and sent them the aid they asked for, and He accompanied them in peace. Worshipping there were the *naxarars* and all the military troops with them, as well as the blessed *kat'oghikos* Yohan [who possessed] angelic faith and who provided them with his soul's true and just blessing, as food, and who accompanied them to the military action.

[237] Then [the troops] bade farewell to *aspet* Sahak, the *marzpan*, to Vahan Mamikonean, the general of Armenia, and to their other comrades who were remaining there at the *ostan* with them. They went quickly, with joyous enthusiasm. They planned and said: "Who knows, maybe we can reach the ford where the Iranian brigades want to cross, and wait in some unexposed place. When we know that half of the brigade has crossed the river, we can fall on them and perhaps do some damage. Similarly, we can fall on the rest of them and easily defeat them."

When they reached the village named Varazkert, they learned that the Iranian brigades had all crossed the river, and that there were 7,000 troops. The brave *sepuh* of the Mamikoneans, Vasak, (who was the advance-guard that day) went on ahead to the village named Krhuakk', saying: "Let me try to ascertain what if any information there is about the Iranian brigade." Going to Krhuakk' to lodge, suddenly, at daybreak the Iranian *marzpan*, Atrvshnasp, arrived at the same village and heard that Vasak Mamikonean was there. When Vasak, the brave *sepuh* of the Mamikoneans, learned that Atrvshnasp and [238] the Iranians were there, he thought of means of salvation [g122] through bravery by which he then would be able to save his brigade. He ordered [his men] to leave the *shen* and to go through unknown places and streets in groups of two, three, or more, separate from each other. [He told them] to hurry to the village of Varazkert where the *naxarars* and the Armenian cavalrymen were, and to inform them. Then he, Vasak, the brave *sepuh* of the Mamikoneans, by means of messengers, spoke deceptive and nonsensical words to Atrvshnasp, saying: "I have a message for the Armenians who are with you, which, when you and those with you hear it, you will certainly regard such news as pleasant and beneficial both for the lord of the Aryans and for the land of Armenia." When Atrvshnasp heard this, although he secretly rejoiced inside, thinking that [the rebels] had certainly been vanquished, nonetheless he sent back a very severe reply, saying: "What message could a rebellious land send me?"

When the brave *sepuh* of the Mamikoneans, Vasak, knew that his cavalrymen had escaped unharmed, and that there was no doubt of it, he replied to those who had come from Atrvshnasp, saying: "To now we have done nothing bad nor harmed royal affairs. But command me to state the message, hear it, and decide what is fitting and necessary to do about it." Having [239] released the messengers, and having himself mounted his horse, [Vasak] said to the other Iranians who were there: "I was ridiculing you when I spoke with the messengers. No one sent me to you with a message. Rather, I came to observe you, and to see your qualities. But you are bad and useless men. You have come pursuing a bad matter. You will meet with evil and be lost." When the brave man had spoken in this fashion, he departed fearlessly and without concern. When the brave had returned to the Armenian brigade, he told them that the brigade was numerous but that many of the men were useless leaders of asses.

Hearing such words from the brave Mamikonean *sepuh* the men of the Armenian troops consulted among themselves and decided that they had to move from the plain to the mountains. They were united in this thought: "If, with God's aid we are strengthened and beat them, it is fine and good. But should something untoward happen, the security of the mountains will be our protection and aid us." Then they went and encamped in the village named Akorhi [located on mount] Masis.

[240] 69. When they heard that the Iranian brigade was coming against them in war the next day, in accordance with their daily custom, they hastened to conduct the evening service. In the morning, after completing their prayers, those who were there organized themselves to resist them in war. The 400 men were divided into four fronts. At that time Babgen Siwnik' and the brave *sepuh* of the Mamikoneans, Vasak, were set up as military commanders of the center. Garjoyl Maghxaz was designated commander of the left-wing [g123], the two Gnunik's, Atom, prince of the Gnunik', and his brother, Arhastom, [were designated commanders] of the right-wing; between the two parts the brave and select prince of Shirak, Nerseh Kamsarakan, and his brother, Hrahat, stood ready, they said, to quickly go to the aid of whichever side was weakening, and to provide force to all sides. All were certain that these men were good, just, and oath-keeping people.

With the 400 men so arranged, they glorified God and cried out together, saying: "Help us, God our Savior, for the glory of Your name. Let the pagans never say, 'where is their God [Psalm 78, 9-10]?' " They then came forth and massed on a visible promontory of that part of the mountain between the summit and the middle. When the Iranian troops saw so few Armenians, [241] they could not imagine anything except that [the Armenians] had gone crazy and had willingly come forth asking for death. From a distance, the brave select

men of the Iranian troops attacked the Armenian troops; many of the ill-horsed Iranians fell back, and the well-horsed advanced to the site of the battle. It was then that Garjoyl Maxaz took his hundred men, broke the oath [he had sworn] on the Gospel, and joined the Iranian brigade. There thus remained three hundred Armenians in the companies, in accordance with God's command (for the selection of three hundred for Gideon). With help from On High, [the Armenians] applied themselves against the Iranian troops and advancing, they caused the most select men to fall to the ground dead, then and there. Another multitude of the Iranian brigade was scattered and dispersed in the valleys and rocky places. It was there that the *marzpan*, Atrvshnasp, other Armenian apostate *awags* and *naxarars*, and many other Iranians were killed by the wing of brave Vasak, *sepuh* of the Mamikoneans, and Babgen Siwnik'. Many brave men were killed by Atom and Arhastom's group, though through the justice of his enemy the lord of Siwnik', Gdihon managed to save himself for an even more wicked hour, and to barely escape from Atom and Arhastom. But it was Hrahat, son of the [242] venerable Arshawir Kamsarakan, who killed with his spear the very first man to advance from the Iranian brigade.

While they were thus involved, encouraged by the right hand of the Almighty, Garjoyl Maxaz took the Katsac' brigade, together with other rebellious Armenian folk, as well as the brigade which was with him, and, changing direction through the depths of concealed valleys, he came up behind the oath-keeping Armenian troops. Thinking that [the Armenians] would be too occupied killing the enemies of God, [Garjoyl] [g124] wanted to come up from behind, fall upon those whom Christ was strengthening, vanquish them through duplicity, and inherit a great name. But then, suddenly, someone heard the sound of an Armenian being killed by the Katsac', and went to the Kamsarakans to protest. They were angry at the man and wanted to kill him, saying: "That brigade belongs to us, and you deceitfully would cause great damage." But then through the spying of his brother, Hrahat, Nerseh ascertained that indeed the brigade belonged to the enemy. Then the two brothers, with but few men, attacked that limitless multitude. Resembling his father, Nerseh Kamsarakan reached the Katsac' military commander, a mighty and martial man, struck him with his spear and killed him there. Then herding the entire [243] brigade before them, they made more men fall to the ground dead here than had died in the battle. That day was one of noteworthy joy for the believers in Christ, and of shame and destruction for all who had apostasized Christ. Truly the word of the prophet was fulfilled and confirmed, that "Whomever God aids can expel a thousand, and move two myriads [II Deuteronomy 32, 30]."

When the enemy of justice, Satan, saw that the affair had ended so gloriously [for the Christians], he sank into deep depression. He thought: "Everything has turned out incredibly contrary to my wishes. Though I proved incapable and was conquered, let me, at least for a moment, sadden the hearts of the braves who still do not know about the disasters and loss I have suffered." He took two men who were his satellites—one named Varhgosh from the Gnt'unik' *tohm*, the other named Vasak from the Saharhunik' *tohm*—and quickly sent them the next day at dawn to bring this bad news to the ears of the blessed patriarch Yohann, and the two senior princes of Armenia, the *marzpan* Sahak and Vahan Mamikonean: "The two sides clashed violently in battle, the Iranian side grew strong, defeated the Armenian brigade and put them to flight. [244] The soldiers who fell and died by the enemy's sword were: the brave Vasak Mamikonean, the goodly Babgen Siwni, the two renowned men, Nerseh, lord of Shirak, together with his beloved brother, Hrahat, the Gnunik' men Atom and Arhastom, and indeed all the Armenian troops were killed on the side of the mountain where Akorhi is located. We are the only survivors who have come to bring you the bad tidings of Job." This was said by two men who had not even participated in the battle.

Before this news had spread to Duin (so that the wicked *dew* would not be further gladdened by disrupting the city), a messenger bearing glad tidings quickly arrived. His name [g125] was Arhastom, of the Gnunik' *tohm*. Crying out in a loud voice he said: "The power of the holy Cross has triumphed, and always will triumph." He gave his account and related the miracles of God which happened to God's beloved ones through the intercession of the saints, as well as the wicked destruction and shame which the phalanx of apostates

inherited. Hearing this good news, the patriarch of Armenia, Yohan, and the senior princes, the *marzpan*, Sahak, and the *sparapet* of Armenia, Vahan, as well as all the *naxarars* of Armenia and the *rhamiks* went together to the House of God (Whose strength is mighty) and they thanked Him, worshipping the sole true God and the irresistible order of His will. The venerable Yohan, *kat'oghikos* of Armenia had [a passage read] from the [245] twenty-ninth psalm: "The Lord heard and pitied me, and the Lord aided me. He turned my mourning into gladness. He took my sackcloth from me and girded me with gladness. As the psalms say, You are my glory, and I shall regret no more. Lord my God, I will confess You forever" [Psalm 29, 11-13]. Completing the mass, they had an Easter of joy. First they saw to the wants of the poor, and after that they themselves rejoiced with delight.

Then the troops came from battle and again related the victory of God's power which had favored them with the name of great triumph, while giving the enemy a status of dissolution and disgrace. Glorifying Christ, they kissed each other with a greeting of joy, and entered the winter season in untroubled peace and rest. They were concerned about preparations for war in the springtime.

70. They sent an emissary to Vaxt'ang, king of Iberia/Georgia, so that in accordance with his promise, he would provide them with Huns [as auxiliaries]. Wasting time with words, he delayed acting on this. But then, from somewhere, he assembled 300 [246] Huns and sent them to Armenia. Barely one winter month had passed when he quickly recalled them to himself, on a pretext. And the land of Armenia remained protected by the strength of Christ's aid, in whom [the Armenians] took refuge in and depended upon; but there were no people to aid them.

Vahan Mamikonean, the general of Armenia, sent [a message] to the prominent and noteworthy *azg* of Arcrunik', to the *azgs* of the district of Anjewac'ik' and Mokk', and to the *azatorear* of Reshtunik' informing them of how God had helped those who placed their hopes on Him. [He continued]: "Each of you knows the belief and preaching of our correct and true faith quite well, and need not learn it from anyone. You have also seen how the error of the mages, burning like a furnace has ignited and scorched the souls of all but a few. Behold the hour of Christ's just *mshak* has arrived, who takes the hay-rake to sweep his threshing-floor. Cleaning the grain, he [g126] puts it in the heavenly grainaries, and throws the stalks into the eternal, unquenchable fire, for burning. Now whoever wishes to be the grain, will give himself to God's service and live. Whoever draws back, as the straw, will be tinder for the eternal, unpassable Gehenna, will burn, and not be extinguished. I will not forcibly drag anyone to do something for his own benefit, but rather with exhortation I will remind [247] everyone about the salvation or destruction he may encounter on the day of [Christ's] visit. For whoever confesses the truth will be saved from Gehenna, but whoever slips and strays from the direct road will be irretrievably lost. Now let whoever is concerned about his own salvation and longs to inherit immortal life come and seek vengeance on the enemies of the Church, which has been the object of the apostates' scorn and hostility for years. Whoever thinks about physical dread and is desirous of serving the nonsense of deviation will live in gloom and be unworthy to look at Christ, the sun of justice. For this, my soulful protest, may Christ, the just remunerator, recompense me."

When the *naxarars* of the four districts heard this message, half of them (who were desirous of [sitting] on the right hand [of God]) stormed out to join the flock [of Christ's] sheep. Others, who were in communication with the wrong side, among the ranks of the goats, went unswervingly to the outer darkness. A certain *sepuh* of the Anjewac'ik' *naxarars*, whose name was Yohan, as well as an Eruanduni named Nerseh, allied with other men dedicated to the truth to accomplish good, went off to join the brigade of Vahan Mamikonean, the general of Armenia. [248] Having assembled and having set out on the journey, they approached the town [k'aghak'ageoghn] called Arhest during great Easter Week, the time of the forty-day fasting period. Suddenly, at daybreak, without warning, they were attacked by the prince of Anjewac'ik', named Sewuk, and the prince of Mokk', named Yohan, with many cavalymen. When they realized what was happening, although half of them were armed and the other half were unprepared, nonetheless, encouraged with aid from On High, they

fearlessly struck out at them. First Nerseh Eruanduni attacked Yohan, prince of Mokk' piercing him with his spear, and assisted by Yohan, the Anjewac'ik' *sepuh*, sent [Yohan Mokk'] to the ground. This man [Yohan Mokk'] had once said boastfully regarding Yohan, the Anjewac'ik' *sepuh*: "He is like a cow, and needs only to have a collar put on his neck. He is incapable of doing anything for anyone, beneficial or harmful." Yohan's relative Sewuk, the prince of Anjewac'ik', heard this and replied: "I will bring the collar; you fasten it around his neck." As a result of his impious words, he [g127] fell from his horse and was wickedly mauled by the horns of a cow and trampled. When the multitude of the troops saw this, they turned in flight. They were pursued. Some of them were killed, while others were sent fleeing dispersed here and there. They clearly recognized and glorified the power of [249] God which caused so few, unorganized troops to scatter such a multitude. News of this extraordinary event was related all over the land of Armenia.

After this, Yohan, the Anjewac'ik' *sepuh*, and Nerseh Eruanduni and the men with them arrived [at their destination]. God had worked signs and powers through them. When the blessed *kat'oghikos* Yovhan saw them, they offered to the lord God a feast of joy and acceptable services. For God had granted them the victory and raised the splendor of the one holy Church. Saluting them, they rejoiced in Christ.

71. When the bitterly cold days of winter had passed and the mild days of spring had arrived, they heard that many troops were coming from Iran. The following numerous military commanders reached the borders of Her and Zarawand district:

Suren *palhaw*,  
Atrnerseh, the *p'ushtipanan saghar*,  
Vin-i-Xorhean,  
Atrvshnaspn-i-Tapean, and  
Gdihon, lord of Siwnik '.

[250] The commander and senior [official] of the army was the *p'ushtipanan saghar*, even though another [man] of them was higher by *gah*.

Vahan Mamikonean, the general of Armenia, made haste. Taking with him the blessed patriarch of Armenia, lord Yohan (having faith in the man's prayers, and hoping that God would grant everything according to his wishes), and assembling the Armenian troops, he hurried to take them to those places. He said: "Perhaps the multitude of Iranians has not yet crossed into the middle part of the land of Armenia." [Vahan] took along the *naxarars*, *azats* and all the *rhamiks* who willingly went to battle. The Armenian troops left Duin, and passing through the lodging places each day, they reached the district of Artaz. Approaching the Iranian brigade, they encamped in a village named Nersehapat.

The blessed *kat'oghikos*, Yohan, ordered the entire brigade of Armenians to fervently pray the entire night through and to ask the humane Savior to raise His great name among the multitude of assembled pagans, to give his servants glory [251] and to shame the class of apostates. Thus Vahan Mamikonean, the general of Armenia, and the marvellous *aspet* Sahak, the *marzpan*, and all the Armenian troops with ardent hearts, beseeched [g128] God for help and so completed the designated hours of night. When the light of day broke, the blessed *kat'oghikos* of Armenia, Yohan, blessed everyone and said in encouragement: "Those who place their hopes in God are never disappointed. For, as that select vessel of the holy Spirit, Paul, exclaimed in a loud voice: 'Hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts' [Romans 5, 5]. Grow mighty in the love and power of His arm, and you will be able to extinguish all the fiery arrows of satan, visible and invisible. Let no one be in any way frightened seeing the multitude of troops of the infidels. For, since God is with you, he will make your numbers appear greater to them, and, resembling briars tossed by a severe wind, he will disperse them over the face of the plains and hills, and totally destroy them. Now, may the right hand of the Almighty bless you, strengthen you, guide you, and make you victorious. Glory to Him, His Son, and the holy Spirit for all eternity. Amen."

When everyone had said "Amen," they prepared for war. As the Armenian brigades armed against the enemy, the venerable [252] Yohan continued praying. Then Vahan Mamikonean, the general of Armenia, began to organize his side of the front, as was proper. He entrusted the middle section to that good man, *aspet* Sahak, the *marzpan*, along with many cavalymen. In the right wing he designated Bashgh Vahewuni, Babgen Siwni, Atom Gnuni, and P'apak Paluni, each with his cavalry, and others besides. On the left were the oath-loving Kamsarakans and their beloved brothers Vahan, Nerseh, and Hrahat. He placed himself to the right of each of the cavalry brigades. He also prepared other senior men with select cavalry and Vren Vanandac'i. He sent Pap Artakunik' (an *ostanik* man, the son of Baboc') to inform the seniors of each section that: "Opposite us and approaching, I see the banners of the mightiest men, about whom we have been informed earlier—Iranian men, the Katshac', and the Siwnik' brigade. Go slowly and carefully watch us. Let us be the first to attack. If, by the grace of Christ, we can put them to flight by moving our section, then they will be unable to get before our other sections and you."

When Pap took the message of Armenia's *sparapet*, Vahan Mamikonean, to the seniors of each section, although they wanted [253] to act according to the general's order, the brigade of Iranians quickly reached each wing of [each] section, and they did not have time. Clashing with the section on the right, where Bashgh Vahewuni was, they put it to flight. Lord Sahak, the *aspet*, attacked the *p'ushtipanic' saghar* with his spear. Both of them wounded each other with their spears, and approaching each other's horses, they seized each other by [g129] the hair and fought. When Vahan Mamikonean, the general of Armenia, saw that the Armenian troops were crying out and weakening before the enemy, he called to Vren Vanandac'i: "Advance against the enemy and do battle." But the latter, terrified, called back: "I am unable. Right now do not put your hopes on me." Vahan Mamikonean, the general of Armenia, took heart, made the sign of the Cross over himself, and, with the two Kamsarakans, attacked the enemies who were advancing against them. They allowed nothing to stand in their way, and moving their section forward, they put [the Iranians] to flight. With that wing, they entered into the midst of the other wing. Before the two brigades they herded a countless multitude of brave men to the small shoulder of the mountain where they killed them, causing a great bloodletting. Only Vin Xorhean with two other powerful comrades-in-arms [254] audaciously came back to fight them. Vahan Mamikonean, the brave general of Armenia, went and forcefully killed him. Nerseh Kamsarakan, the lord of Shirak, killed Atrvshnasp Tapean, and each of the other [Armenians] killed many brave [Iranian] men. When Barshgh's brigade and the other Armenians who had fled saw that the might of the Iranian brigade had been shattered, and that [the Iranians] were fleeing before the brigade of Armenia's general, Vahan, they took heart and were fortified. They turned back and chased after [their] pursuers, killing many and pursuing many others whom they had before them. The number of those slain from the Iranian brigade exceeded the number who had escaped. And the number of those who died of wounds in various places was greater than those slain from the Iranian brigade at the site of the battle.

The Armenian brigade returned to the camp and to the honorable *kat'oghikos* of Armenia, Yohan, with a good name, much glory and booty, and an enormous amount of goods, glorifying and blessing Christ, the granter of such a victory. [Yohan] went before the victorious brigade with a joyful heart, giving them many blessings and, gladdened by the spirit of strength, he said to all of them: "I am extremely happy and unable to express the joys of my heart in words. But I am even more [255] delighted to see that God is reconciled with you. For though victory has caused me to rejoice, I am even more delighted to see that Christ is your colleague who made you triumph and shamed the opponents of justice. And may God Who now strengthened you, always strengthen you, and be with you, and never leave you, to the very end."

72. While [the troops] were returning from the battle with strengthened, joyful hearts (since the battle had been resolved by divine influence in accordance with the will of the blessed patriarch Yohan and all the Armenian troops) [g130] suddenly a second unexpected piece of good news arrived and spread throughout the entire Armenian camp. For Vard, the brother of Armenia's general Vahan Mamikonean, through the power of God had safely escaped from bondage and had arrived [in Armenia]. When the entire land of Armenia had



filled up with such good news, everyone hurried to the great visitation which God had bestowed upon the land of Armenia. Many of them were so thrilled that when they saw this unbelievable vision they doubted its substance and thought it was not real. But, recalling the irresistible miracles of God's power, they could only glorify and worship the Omnipotent, at whose will and order all difficult and impossible things are made easy and possible. They recalled how the furnace at Babylon had been cooled; the icy wall of Egypt's Red Sea; how the Jordan [river] receded; and how [256] the walls of Jericho fell with a crash. Recalling all of this, offering acceptable prayers of praise, only further inclined the believers to the Omnipotent. [In the case of Vard, God] exercised even more powers than [in the case of] the blessed Apostle Peter. For the angel merely removed him and set him free to develop the preaching of Life. But in the case of Vard Mamikonean, not only was he personally freed, but he peacefully reached the country of Armenia together with his servants, money, and equipment, resembling an eagle in flight [flying] from the secure places of the *shahastan*, from lofty walls, from a multitude of guards surrounded by shields, and [safely] passed through many lodging-places.

It was then that the God-loving men and allies recalled the vow of Vahan Mamikonean which he pronounced before the holy Gospel on the day of their unity—and they realized that God had accepted his [re]conversion, witness, and faith. He said: "Indeed God has recognized the long-standing grief and misery of my heart which I lamented in my error, and He accepted the fruit of confession from my lips. The Omniscient was pleased with my plan and oath, and through His mighty lordship gave me a good sign, allowing me to see my brother, Vard, soon and to rejoice." One could then hear [257] [the following psalm] in all the churches of the land of Armenia, in the martyria of the saints, at festivals and assemblies of unity, in the mouths of priests, and generally of all the people, men and women: "Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity" [Psalm 132, 1]. As for the severe destruction of the enemy and the elevation of the blessed Church, they said, citing the psalms: "They collapsed [g131] and fell; but we rose and stood upright" [Psalm 19, 9], and, "all the horns of the wicked were cut off, but the horns of the righteous were exalted" [Psalm 74, 11]. And with thanks they gave praise, saying: "Then we thy people, the flock of thy pasture, will give thanks to thee for ever; from generation to generation we will recount thy praise" [Psalm 78, 13].

73. Now after many days had passed, wise and learned people observed a halo over the brave *sepuh* Vasak Mamikonean [The editors p. 132 n.6 suggest "not many days." The reading of "halo" is not certain] brother of Armenia's general, Vahan, and knew thereby that the blessed man's end was approaching. The holy Vasak had [258] asked God to allow him to see the arrival of his brother Vard in the flesh, and then to take [him] joyfully on the day his request was granted. Almighty God quickly implemented the request of His saint, in no way delayed granting the man's desire, but quickly accepted the request, sent [Vasak's] brother Vard back and showed him to [Vasak] and to everyone, He left [Vard] in health among his remaining living servants, and called His blessed witness, Vasak to him, crowning him and causing him to dwell in the mansion of His Kingdom, among the angels of Heaven.

[The Armenians] then reached Caghkeotn where they wanted to relax awhile in the baths called Varshaki. An emissary came to them from the king of Iberia/Georgia, Vaxt'ang, saying: "An enormous brigade has reached the country of Iberia. When I saw that I could not resist it, I fled to the Armenian mountains which border on Iberia, and I await you there." [The emissary] had a letter supposedly written by Vaxt'ang which said: "I have commanded a brigade of Huns to come, but they have not arrived yet. But by the time you arrive, they will be here. Then you, we, and the Huns shall destroy them. But it seems to me that when the Huns arrive we shall not have to participate. They will do the job, for I have ordered such a great multitude to come."

[259] Vahan Mamikonean, the general of Armenia, all the senior *tanuters* and *sepuhs* of Armenia, with all the troops of Armenia, quickly arose and went to the king of Iberia/Georgia without delay since they had sworn an oath with king Vaxt'ang of Iberia, on the Gospel and Cross. They temporarily encamped in the district of Kangark' where Vaxt'ang, the king of Iberia, distracted Armenia's general Vahan Mamikonean and the other senior *tanuters* of Armenia, saying, at times: "When Mihran heard about your arrival, out of fear he fled from

the borders of Iberia to Aghbania/Aghuania." Then: "The Huns' brigades will arrive in two days." But the two days of this deceitful deadline passed, then the third, then the fourth, and [Vaxt'ang] continued with his excuses. Then the sixth and seventh days came and went. Then he had spies dispatched from the brigade of Iberians and Armenians. They descended [g132] to some parts of the plains and made it appear that the lights of many fires blazed there and that the tree trunks were armed like men (in accordance with the trick of Alexander of Macedon). Then [Vaxt'ang] reported: "The Huns' brigades will not come to us in the mountains. Rather, they say, show us here in the plains the Armenians and then we will believe everything that you have said and vowed to us. Then will we do everything you command. Otherwise, we will not believe that the Armenians [260] are really allied with you. But if we see that it is indeed the case, then leave the Iranians to us and do not worry. Now if you do not descend to the plain, and the Huns' brigades do not believe me and do not move anywhere up from the land, and if Mihran returns and ruins Iberia/Georgia, then what good will your arrival have done me?"

The Armenian brigade, since it had made an oath with the king of Iberia attempted to carry out everything he said (be it true or false) because of fear of the Gospel. Although the season was very hot, they were forced to descend into the Charmanaynu plain. Some of the Armenian princes did not consider the descent of the Armenian brigade into Iberia as a good thing. Although they said this many times, nonetheless, since they were not believed, they kept quiet.

The Armenian brigade descended into Iberia/Georgia and encamped at the aforementioned place. Three or four days had not passed when Mihran came and encamped opposite the Armenian camp, on the other side of the river known as the Kur. The Armenian camp went to a place more distant from the Iranian camp and lodged there. But that night, many people in the [261] Armenian brigade, forgetting the fear of the oath to God and tramping under foot the terrible vow on the Gospel, secretly communicated with each of their friends in the Iranian army, saying: "Many of us are involved in this matter not because we want to be, but out of fear of Vahan, Armenia's general. But our plans and thoughts are with you. We know that we would not leave your service but that bad individuals among us to now have sought to increase the damage done to us. But if you do not ever recall these words of ours, and have mercy on us, you will rule [us]. For tomorrow, when we come to the place of battle, we will quit the brigade and cause many others to flee with us." They swore a vow with the Iranians, and confirmed these words.

The next day, when they reached the site of the battle, the king of Iberia/Georgia at that time also spoke with Vahan, Armenia's general, and with the other senior *tanuters* and *sepuhs* of Armenia, saying: "It is good that we are fighting with the Iranian troops today. For now we are sufficient for them, and they will be unable to withstand us. But if we had to postpone it by yet another day, the Huns would come and would take the name of triumph as well as the profit of the booty." And at this [late] hour he was still delaying and deceiving with [262] duplicitous words.

74. Although Armenia's general, Vahan Mamikonean, was saddened by the false and vain words of the Iberian/Georgian king, [g133] and recognized the weakness of the Armenian brigade (for he noticed that they were forlorn and indolent, in no way resembling their earlier diligence and enthusiasm) nonetheless, Vahan organized them into fronts. He entrusted the right wing to Barshgh Vahewuni and Saton Gabeghean; the left wing to Vaxt'ang, the king of Iberia; and he himself organized the center with the two sons of the venerable Arshawir, and the venerable lord of Gnunik'; he placed the venerable *aspet* Sahak and Babgen Siwni between himself and Barshgh.

While the two sides, Iranian and Armenian, were ranged opposite each other, but had not yet begun to fight, the divine power revealed which of the men would receive the crown of martyrdom that day. For the divine power transformed the ordinary mortal aspect of these faces into something radiant. This was clear and evident. One especially saw the bravery of Vasak Mamikonean, brother of Armenia's general, Vahan, for his

face was illuminated with the glory of God. [263] Many of [Vasak's] comrades, the comrades-in-arms of the blessed man, were unable to restrain themselves when they saw his radiant face which was illuminated like the face of the great prophet Moses. Even his own brother, the great general of Armenia, Vahan, looked and was awestruck and realized, then and there, that on that day [Vasak] would be taken from him and from this filthy life and be translated to the army of the joyous, whose soldiers had that same appearance and form.

The Armenians and Iranians attacked each other. Vahan, the general of Armenia, together with the two Kamsarakan brothers attacked the enemy opposite them and dispersed them causing them to flee, making many of the Iranian troops cross over to the other side of the Kur River, and bravely killing many prominent Iranian warriors. The valiant Mamikonean *sepuh*, Vasak, forcefully hit a certain soldier of the Iranian brigade with his spear and sent him crashing to the ground. And, unexpectedly, his spear shattered. Brave Vasak Mamikonean looked for and found another spear, and quickly and happily turned back. He encountered Nerseh Kamsarakan, the lord of Shirak, who also had broken his spear and was searching for another. [264] Valiant Vasak Mamikonean cried out: "Hurry and find a spear, Nerseh, and come back quickly. For we shall never find such a wonderful opportunity for transforming death into immortality, the present into eternity, or the [g134] corruptible into incorruptible life. Hurry, or we will not attain immortality. Perhaps, having missed the opportunity for a renowned and glorious death, we will later quit this life through a nameless and useless death." Many times Nerseh Kamsarakan himself, the lord of Shirak, related to us these words of the blessed Vasak Mamikonean, with a reliable oath.

While Armenia's general, Vahan Mamikonean, his venerable brother, Vasak, and the two sons of Arshawir Kamsarakan were competing thus, suddenly the entire brigades of Armenians and Iberians quickly fled. Many of the traitors cried out to each other in agitation: "The Armenians are fleeing, escape"! And because the equitable divine right hand of the Omniscient did not favor them then with martyrdom in accordance with their diligent and eager request, in accordance with His secret and inscrutable providence, the brave general of Armenia, Vahan Mamikonean, and the other oath-keeping [265] comrades who were with him (who fervently desired the cup of martyrdom, but were found unworthy) turned their horses around and went after the fleeing Armenians. Armenia's general, Vahan Mamikonean, encountered Babgen Siwni, who had fallen gravely wounded by the Iranian troops. Putting him on his own steed, [Vahan] removed him from the battle and saved him. But there were those who wanted to be chosen [for martyrdom] and who were found worthy, along with the blessed *aspet* Sahak and the blessed brave Vasak Mamikonean, and died that day. Their names are as follows..[The editors note (p. 135 n. 23) that not only are the names of the fallen missing, but also accounts of the deaths of *aspet* Sahak and Vasak Mamikonean himself are absent.]

As for the entire Armenian forces as well as the useless Iberian/Georgian troops together with their king Vaxt'ang, they were dispersed and scattered. The Iranian brigades pursued them and killed many of them, though many others escaped to various places and saved themselves.

But Hrahat Kamsarakan, after violently racing his horse, fell to the ground and the Iranians reached him while he was on foot, seized him, and took him to Mihran. When Mihran saw him, he was delighted. He threatened him with severe words and then had him bound and kept carefully. Wherever [266] [Mihran] went in the land of Armenia, he took [Hrahat] along with him. [The Iranians] also seized a Siwni *sepuh* named Yazd, and some others from the land of Iberia.

75. Now Vahan Mamikonean, the general of Armenia, temporarily went to a more secure place in [the district of] Tayk', where the dregs of the Armenian fugitives and other the senior *naxarars* of Armenia gathered around him. The two Kamsarakans were always with him, inseparable and [g135] united. Mihran came after them with a brigade and tried to either kill them in battle or to take them by strategem, or to subdue and subject them.

There was an enormous camp of Aryan troops at the village named Du, at the border of Iran and Byzantium. Vahan Mamikonean was about two *hrasax* distant from it at a village named Mkarhinch' with 100 men, more or less. Mihran had encamped near him with so many thousands, and the place where Armenia's general Vahan Mamikonean was, was under the authority of the king of Iran. God had so strongly graced the brave Vahan Mamikonean with His great power, that Mihran and [his] brigade [267] quaked in the midst of such a large brigade of powerful brave men, hemmed in by horrible fear from On High, and he did not dare go against them to kill those whom he had wanted, to pursue and destroy the remaining fugitives. Instead, he constantly sent mild messages to [Vahan], seeking peace, and saying: "Do not ruin yourself. Do not quit the service of the king of kings. Do not permit the land of Armenia to be destroyed. Come to the king in obedience and I will be the intermediary, since (because of his benevolence) he likes me and listens to what I say. I will beseech the king and reconcile him with you, and will try to give you what is fitting."

Vahan Mamikonean, the *sparapet* of Armenia, replied to Mihran as follows: "Whoever is the lord of the Aryans, should look upon all people with just eyes, as a king; he should look with justice and listen with justice, as befits a king. But as for the king who does not look properly upon his servants, does not listen properly to someone's words, rules only through authority and not by the worthy laws of inquiry, who, moreover, is very haughty, perpetually the cause of the destruction of a land, wants to see with another's eyes [268] and hear with another's ears—no one can stand before such a king, and serving him is onerous, bitter, and dangerous. For a lord who does not know how to select the good and bad among his servants, and does not want to provide what is required for each according to his worth, can hardly be a good lord to his servants. Now as for Armenia, such a great and excellent land: show me a man in such a land who has attained *tanuterut'iwn* worthily through royal favor. No, only despicable men, brigands, parasites, and men from bad *tohms* who [are able to] deceive such a great kingdom are given glory and lordship according to [acceptance of worship of] the fire. But as soon as they are a little way distant from you, they urinate on the fire and throw their excrement on it, and they revile both the merchant and his wares [*ew zvacharhakann ew zvacharhn i miasin t'shnamanen*]. But goodness, bravery, intellect and knowledge [g136] by which the land is cultivated and endures, these things are not demanded, but are scorned. Rather, the duplicity of despicable men of bad *tohms* has presented itself as respect-worthy, and you yourselves know this. You, a Mihran, as well as all the Iranians have heard the following words pronounced by Peroz, lord of the Aryans, at *atean* in the presence [269] of everyone: "The worst man and worst brigade is the Syrian. But the Armenian is even more despicable and worse than that." Truly, is not death preferable to hearing that from such a king? Now I have already fought two battles with Aryan men, and the third will be the one I fight with you. During those two battles, you [Iranians] fought with such prominent and brave men that even the lord of the Aryans, and all the Aryans recognized what kind of folk they were. Nor were there any foreigners helping us, neither Huns, nor Byzantine, nor anyone of any other nationality. But as you know, it was only the Armenians who accomplished such a great deed, which all of you Aryans saw and heard about. It was accomplished not with many cavalymen, but with 100 men, or even less than that, [we] put to flight one or two thousand men. As for this [most recent] battle, do not delude yourselves into thinking that you beat us because of any superior bravery. Rather, it was that we were troubled with discord and treachery. For if there existed an Armenian brigade over which [there prevailed] dread and fear, such as the lord of the Aryans [enjoys] over his servants, and if I had control of it, as my ancestors did, and if I boldly dared to requite the poor fighters by taking their lives and beheading them, and rewarded the good fighters with honor, [270] then I could show the lord of the Aryans, and all of you which of the Aryan brigade is the [most] renowned and best. If there were better and braver men, I would not permit the weak and inferior ones to appear. But the people whom you have designated as princes of Armenia, being wretched men from bad *tohms*, in accordance with their baseness, have eradicated bravery, goodness, and good reputation from the land of Armenia. For if the military commander of a brigade is bad, the brigade itself cannot be good; and the land whose princes are vile, cannot be progressive and renowned.

"Regarding myself, you all know that since I was left [an orphan] as a boy by [the death of] my [fore]fathers I know not their merits in the Aryan world, nor was I in any way a participant in what they did. But when I became a conscious person, and became worthy of serving your Aryan lord, I resolved before God and man to justly serve the lord and you, and to earn just recompense. The more I concerned myself with doing good things, and the more I labored, the more your evil unworthy Armenian princes slandered me. And you listened to them uncritically, [271] and did not look upon me fairly. I wondered how I could [g137] correct the views about me held by the lord of the Aryans and the *awags*. Even if I found no favor, it was important to me that at least they regard me correctly. When I could discover no shortcoming in the service I had rendered, and was unable to do any more, when I was unable to stop the mouths of my enemies who slandered me (and saw that your ears and those of your lord were open to such falsehoods, but that you would not think about me honestly), when I could find no alleviation of the sadness which had taken hold of me, when I was unable to flee the land, I had a wicked thought—I wanted to kill myself. Unfortunately, it is impossible to kill only the body; one loses the body and the soul together. I had apostasized the Truth I had known, that God is the real creator and lord of all. I worshipped falseness and error. Today I confess to you and to the entire world that [Zoroastrianism] is a false and filthy deception. After doing the destructive thing that I did [*i.e.*, conversion] I was daily plagued with fear that I might die with this sin and be eternally lost. Taking charge of my soul, I rejected the fear of kings, dropped the pang of apostasy, and became illuminated. Now I am happy and ready for persecution, poverty grief and death. For whatever I encounter as a Christian, I am happy and immortal.

[272] "As for what you said about persuading the king to forgive us—and indeed you can do it—first and foremost let him permit Christianity in the land of Armenia and take from our land that filthy trade which wretched and bad men duplicitously take from you only to ridicule you and the ashes. You must recognize which men are good and which are despicable, you must demand work from each, and not humor. And looking at the work performed, you must reward people according to their labor and not because of deceitful licentious talk. You should have it put in writing and sealed that "your offense occurred because of our tyranny and not because of your impertinence and audacity," and you should pardon it. You should keep the highborn with the highborn, and the ignoble with the ignoble. Should you 'subdue' us in this way, you are our natural lords, [the lords] of our fathers and ancestors, and we will serve and submit to you. However, should you continue considering the least as the best, and the best as the worst, conducting the authority of the land with filthy sins, and not looking justly at worth and usefulness, we who rebelled are ready to do it again. For we [273] knew that we would not be able to withstand the Aryans, knowing as we do the unfortunate power we possess and the great, inestimable brigade and powerful force of the Aryans. We had resolved only to die. We are even more delighted [to continue fighting] [g138] for we will die a noteworthy and good death as Christians, rather than become the inheritors of eternal ruination, having purchased transitory glory through apostasy."

76. While Mihran and Armenia's general, Vahan Mamikonean, were communicating with each other in this fashion, suddenly an emissary arrived from court, urgently summoning Mihran to return. [Mihran], hurried to court with all his multitude, taking along the captive Hrahat, the venerable Yazd, and other captives. Following behind with great diligence but sadly was [Hrahat's] brother, Nerseh, the lord of Shirak, with some select men (who had seen Nerseh's unbelievable and inconsolable grief, were touched remembering his goodness to them, and went along with him). For from the day the Iranians had taken his brother Hrahat, Nerseh, the lord of Shirak, was unable to stop crying, to sleep on a bed, or to eat without tears. Whatever he ate had a wicked bitterness in his mouth. So he followed after the Iranian brigade, thinking: "Who [274] knows, after spying on the different wings of the brigade, I may be able to fall on one and free him. If not, at least in meeting my death I will quench this inconsolable sadness." After following them through a number of lodging places, unable to devise any strategem, he drew near by one lodging-place to the blessed site of the champion Gregory's home, in the village called Bagawan. When Nerseh Kamsarakan saw the place of the champion Gregory and recalled the sadness that the saints shared with those grieving, as well as the blessed

man Gregory's courage toward God, [Nerseh] cried out to that man of God in a loud voice mixed with tears, saying; "Lord Gregory, who drove from the land of Armenia that severe fog of the impiety of our sins, drive away the dense fog of sadness from my heart, and grant that I may see my beloved brother with me, and healthy. For everything is possible for God, and He will willingly hear and fulfill your request." Thus weeping and lamenting did Nerseh Kamsarakan cry out to Gregory, the man of God. But he did this with his heart, not his mouth. [Gregory] heard this and quickly spoke to Christ, and the savior God then and there removed the captive Hrahat from the guards who were surrounding him carefully, and [God] peacefully freed him to go to his beloved brother and his land.

[275] When Mihran, the military commander of the Aryans, and the other nobility with him saw the fearless and brave exit of Hrahat Kamsarakan, they ordered that the venerable *sepuh* of Siwnik', Yazd, be brought before them. They began to [g139] speak to him in a rough and threatening manner, saying: "A man who has done so much damage and harm toward people like himself cannot possibly live, to say nothing of someone who has [wronged] the lord of the Aryans, who is god-like and has the power to kill or spare anyone. The great glory of the king of kings enveloped the miscreant Hrahat (who deserves multiple deaths for his wicked deeds) and delivered him into our hands. Although we wanted to preserve and spare him, nonetheless, his capital offenses pursued the man making him unworthy of pardon. Sooner or later he will be destroyed by them. For if someone flees from a great and mighty prince, he is hardly able to hide himself; so where can a fugitive hide and live if he has fled from the gods? Now you, his comrade in those wicked capital offenses, can find no other means of saving your life than to take refuge in the fire, worship the sun, and through their intercession find forgiveness from the king, and live. We give you such advice to preserve you, since we hope for your life and not your death." The impious prince of Siwnik', Gdihon, [276] also enthusiastically encouraged the venerable Siwnik' *sepuh*, Yazd, in this same idea many times, through messengers and letters whenever [Gdihon] himself was with the Iranian *awags* at camp. [Gdihon] and the Iranians] did this like malicious and envious brothers, and not so that by apostasizing [Yazd] would live, but so that through apostasy he would die with a bad name.

When the venerable Yazd had heard all of these words from Mihran and all the other Iranian nobles, and realized the wishes and plans of the impious brothers [including] his own brother Gdihon, he replied as follows: "Should someone be selling transitory, physical life, and should I be able to buy it and live, because of the body's pains and out of love for life, I would certainly give everything I have in my poverty, and purchase [life]. But it would be extremely stupid to buy eternal punishment and the threat of the inextinguishable [fires of] Gehenna with material goods. Espscially since the merchant's appearance is not known. For no one knows how close or far his life is from the gate. What if he purchases [life] and is saved, but dies the next day and is transported to the outer darkness? Why should I now conduct [277] such a calamitous and disastrous business at the expense of my apostasy, for life, when soon [life] itself will be taken from me together with the glory and very great honors? No, I have chosen [the faith] that I now hold, and regard it as good and honorable. I am glad and pleased to die a Christian rather than to live thousands of years in apostasy and to inherit eternal, unending punishment."

When the impious judges heard these words from the blessed Yazd, they ordered that the venerable man's head be severed. This occurred close to the site of the holy chapel of the [g140] blessed Gregory, the Apostle-like champion, in the village called Bagawan, in the district of Bagrewand, on the mountain shoulder of Npat mountain, about two stone's throws from the holy chapel. The blessed Siwnik' *sepuh*, Yazd, ended his life in martyrdom on the 16th day of the month of Horhi [translator's note: Horhi was the second month of the ancient Armenian calendar]. His remains were gathered and placed in the holy chapel of Gregory.

77. Vahan Mamikonean, the general of Armenia, arrived at the district of Ayrarat and, together with the oath-keeping *naxarars* and other troops of Armenia who were with him, fulfilled the vow of masses in the city of Vagharshapat. In the House of God, and in the martyria of the martyred virgins they conducted the masses

[they had] vowed and offered gifts to [278] God. After first concerning themselves with maintaining the poor, they then glorified God themselves, with great rejoicing. Then they went to the natural *ostan* of Armenia, to Duin, until the bitterly cold days of winter had passed.

Just as they were desirous of resting awhile and relaxing from labor, unexpectedly diabolical and insane men arrived from the Iberian/Georgian region. At the *ostan* they told Armenia's general, Vahan, false and deceitfully misleading things which they themselves had not witnessed, in order to destroy and disrupt his troops. They told everyone: "The wonderful *aspet* Sahak and the brave *sepuh* of the Mamikoneans, Vasak, are still alive and well, and they sent us to you to tell you: 'After your flight from the Iberian battle, we remained at the site of the battle, gravely wounded. Through God's influence, at times crawling, at times dragging ourselves (because of the severity of the wounds we had sustained) we drew near to one another, and, falling over, [hid] in some very dense buck-thorn bushes. Through God's design, a spiritual priest from the Teghac' retreat was placed as our guardian, and, that same hour, one by one he lifted us up and took us about one Iranian *hrasax* away. He still did not know who we were or from what district. But in accordance with his virtue, he [279] treated us as men wounded for the sake of God, and he wanted to save us or, in the event that we died, to gather our bones for the sake of his own soul. This man, after removing us from the [battle]site to a secure place, became confident. He then went to his monastery, brought us a small amount of food and water, brought yet another cleric with him, offered us the food and bade us eat. After eating the food as we could from the saint's hands, we were revived a bit [g141]. When he saw that we had been revived somewhat and opened our eyes, he gradually began to interrogate us as to where we had come from, and from what district, since, he said, our manner and demeanor were such that he was led to believe we were *azats*. When we saw the man's virtue, we accurately informed him about ourselves. When he heard this, he glorified God. Leaving the cleric with us, he left us and went to his monastery. The next evening he returned with pack animal(s) and yet another cleric, and they placed the three of us on the animal(s) and took us to the retreat where they dwelled. They concealed us there with them for many days, and through the power of God we were healed and made well. As is the custom of the adversary satan, [news of our escape] was breathed into the ears of some God-hating men. They started to hunt for us tirelessly and wanted to kill us, to achieve glory and honors from the Iranians. [280] Now the blessed monk secretly took us about, to many deserted places and many rugged caves. But [the priest] was afraid to send to you from there, thinking that if someone pursued and examined [the messenger] we would be discovered and killed. But now, hurry and send here a strong brigade with a dependable military commander and bring us to you, so that when we reach there together we shall avenge the truth of our faith.'"

When they heard these satanic words from the stupid men, they immediately believed them and said: "Now we must move even more quickly, for when they safely come to Armenia and the Iranians find out that they are indeed alive, their entire force will disintegrate and forsake them." This was even more so when word reached the women that their men were alive (since that night the diabolical men spoke to the men and women with proof and were believed). For the women (in accordance with the fickle and infirm nature of women) did not cease urging their dear ones, relatives, *dayeaks* and servants day and night, to quickly go [to Iberia] and to immediately retrieve them.

When the brilliant and perceptive general of Armenia, Vahan Mamikonean, heard all the words of the diabolical men from Iberia, the wishes and consent of many Armenians, the [281] ceaseless, impatient urgings of the wives—which resembled a fire blazing in their minds which none had the strength to put out—[Vahan] said: "Those are the words and plans of men of poor judgement with feeble minds. For, as the Iranian [g142] corps knows of the arrival of spring in the country of Armenia, they have plotted to pull apart and rend asunder the assemblage of Armenian troops at the *ostan*, and to disperse them here and there. For even if the brigade from Iran is very small, nonetheless they will arrest and destroy them. So that my words do not seem contradictory to some, I [state that] I will not permit [these] world-destroying men to leave the land of Armenia in health. Because on the day of my venerable brother's martyrdom, I [fore]saw the martyrdom and I

saw him receive his crown before he received it. And before the end I was shown the color and aspect of that army and force, which was fated to die. [This is] because long before we had attacked and reached each other, [Vasak's] face was illuminated by a light the like of which I cannot describe. Astonished at the appearance of his face, I wanted to [282] look at him again, but was unable because the increasingly bright light from his face struck me with awe. It appears that others saw the same vision of his miraculous color then. I realized right away that he would be taken from me and mingle with other hosts, whose troops had that same aspect and radiance. And I tell you, do not seek [Vasak] and do not labor [looking] for the *aspet*. You are like the sons of the prophets who were occupied with idle affairs, and who, confounded, sought Elisha. But they did not heed his protest about not working and returned, full of shame. For you too will return ashamed and regretting it. But, so that I do not appear [overly] jealous to anyone, the men are before you, troops and *naxarars* of Armenia. I will not prevent anyone from going who wants to go. Only know and remember how much damage your departure will bring to the land of Armenia."

But imprudent and weak-minded men, and especially the martyrs' wives, families, and *dayeaks* then convinced the *sepuh* of the Mamikoneans, Musegh, and they dispatched [him] with a brigade of many select men to go with those false and fraudulent men on a road they did not know for futile matters. Those who led them to the borders of Iberia after Satan, were in fact Satan's satellites and they invented many pretexts, telling [the Musheghians]: "Those who have escaped their killers are in hiding, moving about hither and thither in deep caves [283] and the densely forested peaks of tall mountains." Thus for many days they goaded the *sepuh* of the Mamikoneans, Mushegh, and the brigade with him to insanity, leading them around until the end of the bitterly cold winds of winter's frost.

78. When it was the blooming time of spring and the breezes brought welcome warmth to the naked paupers, suddenly [g143] Zarmihr Hazarawuxt with a multitudinous, enormous force of select men, reached the country of Armenia. Urgently crossing over the bridge on the Arax River, he encamped that day in the town called Artashat. For he had been well informed by the oath-breakers about the departure of half of the Armenian brigade to Iberia/Georgia, and that Vahan Mamikonean, the *sparapet* of Armenia, was at the *ostan* with but few *naxarars* and only a few select cavalymen: "When you go against them with such a select multitude, even though they are prepared to die, they will be unable to arrest such a mass of cavalry. No, you will outnumber them by three or four times, and can put them all to the sword. Then you will complete the assignment and will be enveloped in the king's glory and we shall rest from this very protracted affair." When Hazarawuxt and the other *awag*'s with him heard these words, they were more [284] delighted, and the next morning they speedily went against Armenia's general, Vahan Mamikonean, and the troops with him at the time. Having approached the city of Duin, Hazarawuxt deployed the front(s) in war formation, and arrayed them in the midst of the forest called Xosrovakert. Then he passed against the *dastakert* as far as the side of the mountain called Jrvezh.

When Armenia's *sparapet*, Vahan Mamikonean, and the other Armenian *naxarars* with him and the *rhamik* cavalymen of Armenia saw such a multitude of Iranian troops which filled the entire plain with the Iranian brigade billowing like an ocean—even though they knew that they could not resist them—nonetheless though astonished, they did not turn in flight. Rather, in accordance with the competency of their force, the *naxarars* divided into groups of two or one and attacked. Valiantly taking a part of the Iranian brigade, they sent many select men hurtling dead to the ground, got hold of their swift horses, and bravely departed. For the brave departure of the powerful man foretold great dread in the brigade regarding its future hostile operations. What had happened was made known to many and they sampled the taste of this, and were amazed, more so than others. This was very well known by the boastful prince of Siwnik', Gdihon.

[285] But as for those men who enthusiastically and willingly chose to remain there and were martyred, [among them were] two of the Armenian *naxarars* who fought well and displayed bravery: the venerable Ordi from the Dimak'sean *tohm* and the venerable K'ajaj from the Saharhunik' *tohm* who gave their lives for



the blessed covenant and were crowned. The Iranian troops wickedly stabbed and routed [the Vahaneans]. The blessed patriarch of Armenia, lord Yohan, having been thrown from his [g144] horse was left there half-dead. For the provoker of impiety, Hazarawuxt, had come against the Armenians so rapidly that not even the *kat'oghikos* Yohan himself had a day to quit the city. However the almighty compassion of the Savior Christ pitied and spared his oath-loving flock and took the holy father away safely and peacefully displayed him to his people and made them happy.

The same day, after the fighting was over, Mushegh, the *sepuh* of the Mamikoneans, and the cavalymen with him arrived. Because they had not arrived in time to be of aid in the battle they turned and fled with the other fugitives.

[286] 79. Thus were the forces of Armenia scattered, each one going here or there. Armenia's general, Vahan Mamikonean, and the *naxarars* of Armenia who were with him, together with each [person's] *dayeaks* and beloved servants tried to go to a secure place on the borders of Xaghteaç', to stay awhile and rest and recuperate a little, to remain hoping for and awaiting the Lord's salvation. The restless Hazarawuxt speedily went after them to fight, talking along all the forces. As he went he took many of the fortified places of Armenia, demolishing and ruining them, and moving on. He killed many people and caused torrents of blood to flow. Seeking strategems, he boasted very greatly that he would either arrest the brave Vahan Mamikonean or kill him in battle. Then he would rest.

[Hazarawuxt] went to Ok'agh and camped close to the village called [by two names], one [of which] was Giwghik, and the other, Vardashen. He encamped there that day, and on the next day he heard that Vahan Mamikonean was close to him at Varayr Varoy, Horhom *tun*, in the district called Shaghagom. Informed about the place through guides and thinking that the brilliant Mamikonean was there unconcerned, he reached the place at daybreak and fell upon Horhom *tun* unexpectedly. He encountered there a multitude of different people, including the wives of the two [287] Kamsarakans, of Nerseh, lord of Shirak, and of Hrahat (whom the Iranians fell upon unawares); and they killed many of the *rahamik* people of Armenia. They also seized the wives of the two Kamsarakan brothers, Nerseh and Hrahat, and took them to the Iranian camp.

However [Hazarawuxt], not encountering Armenia's general, Vahan Mamikonean, and some of the other *naxarars* who were with him turned back unhappily because he had not accomplished what he was seeking to achieve, missing the mark. When [Hazarawuxt] had confirmed that the women were indeed their wives, he was inwardly delighted. For he reasoned that by means of them he [g145] certainly could hunt and capture Vahan. "For they are [Vahan's] heart and trusty, committed allies. Should I be able to pry them from him, if he remains alone, without them, either [Vahan] will be subdued and will obey us (as we wish), or, he (and he alone) will flee to a foreign country, and be lost." As for the wives of the two Kamsarakans, [Hazarawuxt] ordered that they be kept in sanctity and with every caution, in accordance with the faith/laws of the Christians which he had certainly heard about. Then he himself went to Ok'agh, descended to the district of Basean, and encamped close to the village named Du, in the plain of the fountains, called Arcat'aghbersn. Remaining there for one day, an emissary reached [Hazarawuxt] from court, bearing a *hrovartak* which king Peroz [288] had written to inform him that [Peroz] and the entire Aryan force had gone against the Hephthalites. [Peroz] ordered [Hazarawuxt] to go to Iberia and either to seize and kill the Iberian king, Vaxt'ang, or to chase him from the land; and to leave Shapuh of the Mihran *tohm* with a brigade there in the land of Armenia, as *marzpan*.

80. When Hazarawuxt received the *hrovartak* and heard the king's command, he left [in Armenia] Shapuh with the Iranian cavalry, a brigade of choice men, as well as Gdihon, the lord of Siwnik', with a brigade drawn from the entire district of Siwnik' and quickly went to Iberia. There Hazarawuxt assembled the ranks of the oath-breakers who, having betrayed king Vaxt'ang and broken the oath sworn on the Gospel, went to him. He also assembled others who were united with the king of kings. He promised the kingdom to one, and

to another *gah* and *patiw* and much *pargew*, and to many others whatever they needed. Thus he formed a brigade from the many who allied with him in the land of Iberia. When king Vaxt'ang saw that his own people had deceived and left him for Hazarawuxt, and that the Armenians themselves were unable to accomplish anything and were in danger, he quit the land of Iberia and temporarily went to the land of Egeria.

[289] Shapuh took the Kamsarakan women to the secure fortress of Basen called Boghberd, and left them there. Entrusting the Kamsarakan women to the fortress-keeper Vazat-Vshnasp, [Shapuh] ordered him to keep them very carefully and in sanctity in accordance with their Christian faith. The Kamsarakan women themselves had boldly complained to them many times that: "If indeed you want to subdue our men let them know that we are at peace and they will hear and obey anything you tell them. For all the Armenians will know about and testify that you are holding Armenians, for they know no other women than us. But should they hear anything else about us—insults, shameful things, not to mention sinful or loathesome acts—in accordance with our faith they will be even more resolved to die, and will be lost." Shapuh himself knew—and not just second hand—about their determination regarding Christianity and also, as a learned individual he was informed about all of their activities, Christian determination and many other things, through training and thought. As for keeping the women pure, Shapuh repeated this to the fortress-keeper many times, and he ordered that the Kamsarakans hear about this often. He sent [290] to them frequently, saying: "Do not destroy yourselves; do not quit the king of king's service. Rather, come and submit, take your women and through my intercession, I will get the king of kings to pardon the damage you have done. I will bestow upon you what is fitting. The Christianity which you love and have firmly held until now you may hold even more [firmly] from now on, without fear. Because I love you as a son I am advising you in such a way that you will remain alive. Then, should you wish to display some good deed to the king of kings, and [be able to] devise Vahan's death, the king will give you gifts and honors which none of your ancestors has received from kings. And you and your descendants will enjoy this in delight, in peace, and for eternity."

When the two Kamsarakans heard such a message from Shapuh, the Iranian military commander, although they gave various replies and fooled Shapuh for many days, nonetheless they remained firmly convinced in the faith, despite Shapuh's message. Nerseh, lord of Shirak, and Hrahat wrote the following reply: "Our labor and work is not for any mundane pleasures, or for wife and child which to you seem significant and important, but for the mystery of our great and revered faith. Next to [291] the love for such an awesome mystery, all the pleasures of life—land, wives, goods and greatness—seem small and inconsequential. For if we could not see clearly that heaven and earth and everything in them do not equal the honor which we long for, then we would be too stupid to trick you and the other parasites around you, taking an epah of ashes and giving it to one of our maid-servants to pollute as she would. For a moment we might enjoy the futile glory [received] from you and appear lustrous, but then we would be eternally and wickedly lost. But as for our women, we will give you a sign; test and examine it well. For if we bear these sorrows for the faith which we love and firmly hold to, and for the coveted hope of [heavenly] glory and if our works seem pleasing and acceptable to the just God, He will save us from oppression, will preserve our women in all sanctity, and give them to us. Otherwise we will blame our lack of faith, but not your violence and force " [g147].

Thus, having sent such a message to Hazarawuxt, the two Kamsarakan brothers were even more ready and more eager than before to serve Armenia's general, Vahan Mamikonean, to do anything he ordered. They also encouraged others to do likewise.

[292] 81. After Hazarawuxt had departed for Iberia/Georgia, Shapuh remained at Ok'al and tried to implement Hazarawuxt's order: to hunt for Vahan Mamikonean, come upon him unawares, and kill him. But he was able to accomplish nothing, since security from On High surrounded and preserved [Vahan]. Indeed, Vahan Mamikonean with his troops ceaselessly took the Iranians in [their] encampment, each day. Every morning they shot arrows from below [the encampment] and there were those killed by the arrows of the Armenians themselves, and those Iranians killed when other Iranians, becoming a mob, suffocated them.

Then Armenia's general, Vahan Mamikonean, and the men who were with him went to encamp in a nearby village under the authority of the Mamikoneans, called Caghik. They wanted to cross to the border area of Hashtean'k' [district], to get help from the people there.

The Iranian general, Shapuh, was informed that lo, Vahan Mamikonean is encamped in a village and there are extremely few men with him. So before dawn the next day Shapuh, the Iranian military commander, taking all the multitude [of troops] with him suddenly went against the Armenian brigade. But the Armenian brigade was prepared (they were always prepared because [293] Armenia's general, Vahan Mamikonean, taught them to be alert) and they went elsewhere, unharmed. Nonetheless, brigades of Iranian troops, not taking note of the others, went after Armenia's general, Vahan Mamikonean. For they said: "If only we find some way of dealing with him, all our business will be finished and done." Armenia's general, Vahan Mamikonean, went eastward to the area of the sea/lake of Karin, while the brigades of Iranian warriors went after them unable to catch up. Now Mushegh of the Mamikonean *tohm* and Nerseh Kamsarakan, lord of Shirak, were travelling north of the lake, having missed [meeting] Armenia's general, Vahan Mamikonean, at the appointed hour. They were with a few men, and were upset. They approached a village of Karin named Arcat'i, and reached a torrent which was near a village, and they wanted to rest by the bank of the torrent for a while, at a place where reapers of the outer fields (which lay around the villages) were working. [Subsequently] when the Iranians learned that they were unable to catch them, they wanted to harm the *mshaks* of the area. They said: "Why do you permit all servants of the king of kings to travel through your land" [g148]?

[294] Xurs (who was from Shirmac' village in Arshamunik' district), *dayeakordi* of the Kamsarakan lord of Shirak, saw that one of the Iranian soldiers wanted to kill one of the Karnec'i *mshaks*, and that the *mshak* had gone behind a haystack to evade his [would-be] killer. When Nerseh Kamsarakan's *dayeakordi* saw this he got angry at the Mamikonean *sepuh*, Mushegh, and at Nerseh Kamsarakan, saying courageously: "Truly, would not the avenging God demand [an explanation] from us for the man from different lands who dies because of an Iranian?" So Xurs attacked the Iranian with his lance and killed him on the spot, and the Karnec'i escaped his slayer. Stirred by Xurs' words and the deed he had bravely done, the *sepuh* of the Mamikoneans, Mushegh and the lord of Shirak, Nerseh, looked and saw that there were not too many people pursuing them. They fell upon the Iranians with only the few men who were with them, and, strengthened by God's aid, they caused many torrents of blood to flow, while the others were shamefully put to flight. Seven hundred and two men died there. When Armenia's general, Vahan Mamikonean, heard of such successful work he glorified God that without his participation, God bent and broke the enemy's power. And he went to the border of Hashtean'k' in accordance with his previous plan. Reaching the place, he [295] encamped at the village called Erez in the district of Arshamunik', wishing to rest for two days.

82. Gdihon, general of Siwnik', urgently hurried Shapuh, the military commander of the Iranian brigade, saying: "You and the entire Aryan land should go and experience Vahan Mamikonean's bravery. I am unable to fathom the man's actions and deeds. For when the entire brigade at Duin was united around him, he showed us [an example of] his bravery. However the king of king's crown and the glory of the Aryans aided us such that (as you saw) his deeds resulted in one thing, while our's came to a good conclusion. Now tell me, what is the man doing with so few men that every day he depletes and defeats our brigade? See if you can get aid elsewhere, for he will reduce us to but a few, and make us retreat in shame. Furthermore, I am unsure about our retreat even. But hurry and do not let the man rest. Otherwise, perhaps we will slow down and he will exhaust us and embarrass us. If you only left him to me, in but five days, with my brigade alone I would show you how severely I would defeat him and those with him" [g149].

[296] Because Gdihon's deeds were not those worthy of a clean soul, the impure [spirit] within him prophesied about him that: "After five days you will wickedly be killed by the men who are with Vahan Mamikonean." For when the *dew* saw that the man was completely abandoned by God's care, like Saul, [hs realized that] he could kill him wherever he wanted. Now when the Iranian military commander, Shapuh,

heard all these words, he did not permit [Gdihon] or the men with him [to accompany his troops]; rather, in a rage, he himself went after [Vahan]. He encamped in a certain spot near where he wanted to go, thinking to hide in an unknown area by a branch of the river.

Armenia's general, Vahan Mamikonean, and the troops with him were sleeping peacefully at least that night, after convincing the men in the village of Erez [to cooperate]. For everyone listened to his orders out of fear, willingly, as though he were a king set up by God upon the earth. And God Himself was with him in everything he did, wherever that might be. He took his troops and the *shinakans* of Erez and approached the encampment at night. Then, surrounding the battle-site with Erezites holding shields, they violently let loose with [297] a tumultuous downpour of arrows against the Iranian brigade which they terrified. The mob of troops in the encampment mingled with one another and the Iranians trampled one another even more; and there came the sound of weeping and of bad news from the camp of the impious. From the Armenian brigade, only Gabagh, *sepuh* of the Gabegheank', was pierced while enthusiastically battling and displaying great courage. After a few days he died of his wounds and was crowned, being worthy of acceptance by God.

83. Armenia's general, Vahan Mamikonean, left the slaughter of the enemy and went to spend the remainder of the night at the village of Oghin called Shte', in the stables. At daybreak he went and encamped at Shte' village. Just as the Armenian troops of Vahan Mamikonean wanted to rest awhile from the weight of the evening's labors, they raised their eyes and who should they see but the Iranian military commander, Shapuh, coming against them, roaring like a wild beast with an enraged heart. For the wicked injuries of that particular night had seemed more and more serious than those [inflicted] on all previous days. And indeed this was so, since nothing done previously resembled [298] the great carnage which had thoroughly broken [the Iranians] and could now be observed. Armenia's general, Vahan Mamikonean, saw the unexpected attack of the Iranian military commander, Shapuh, and all of the multitude of troops against them. Although he saw that his brigade at the time was unprepared and fewer compared to the enemy's mighty force, nonetheless, he overlooked [g150] nothing. Giving the order, he quickly assembled however many men he had. Then, like a lion, he bellowed: "The believing person cannot miss the mark twice. If he hits the mark both times, it is laudable and honorable. However, one is greater and more desirable than the other. The two encounters are not unwillingly or unthoughtfully met. Living and dying is part of that exaltation for those who wish to live prudently and die hoping. To die for a blessed vow is the lot of martyrdom. Now God has frequently glorified us with the victory and we are thankful of that. And the Almighty will also grant us and crown us with that which is above all else. Let no one ignorantly be frightened through lack of faith. For it was the holy Spirit which said: "Those whom the lord God strikes one through his dear ones can chase a thousand and two put ten thousand to flight" [II Deuteronomy 32, 30]. We belong to God and God will look upon and aid us. We are few in number. But if the Almighty [299] wishes to fulfill [His] promises, [i.e., that each of us will be able to chase away 1,000 of the enemy] then the multitude of the enemy is lacking to become 300,000 [as against our 300]. For, to judge it by sight, they have no more than 4,000. But let us always exalt in God's name and always confess it, for eternity."

When Armenia's general, Vahan Mamikonean, had expressed all these sentiments, he divided the troops he had and entrusted them to each of the military commanders whom he considered able and capable. While he was still organizing the attack and the Iranian troops arranged in fronts were ferociously coming to war, [Vahan] looked and saw that the entire Armenian brigade had turned tail from the oath sworn on the Gospel, and from the counsel of Armenia's general, Vahan Mamikonean, and were all fleeing. Only about 40 people, more or less, remained: Vahan himself and the oath-keepers including Mushegh of the Mamikonean *tohm*, the two Kamsarakan [brothers], sons of the venerable Arshawir, two or three of their *dayeaks*, and other *azats* from the Mamikonean house [g151]. [300] Seeing the flight of the entire Armenian brigade, those who remained were terrified and one of them said to the general of Armenia, Vahan Mamikonean: "Lord, take care, take care"! In other words, [he thought] it was possible to give way and to save himself. But Armenia's general, Vahan Mamikonean, made the sign of the Cross over himself and said in a loud voice: "Let no one

tell me to take care, for I do not place my hopes in man or pride myself in them—God forbid! I [place my hopes] only in the Cross of our lord Jesus Christ."

Then [Vahan] plunged into the entire Iranian army, attacking with the few good oath-keeping men who remained with him. The Iranian military commander Shapuh, astonished by the awesome and courageous strength of Armenia's general, Vahan, and the few men with him, quickly sent to Gdihon, prince of Siwnik', saying: "Help me on this side, because [Vahan] is doing something peculiar and new. I do not know if there is indeed some invisible force aiding them which we cannot see. But if they stupidly want to commit suicide, then let us get them in our midst and arrest all of them today." Gdihon, prince of Siwnik', became ecstatic at Shapuh's summons, and arising, he quickly went to where the campaign was being conducted. Armenia's general, Vahan Mamikonean, with the few like-minded people with him, attacked assisted by the right-hand of the Almighty. He plunged into the entire Iranian brigade as though it was merely a torrential rain which falls [301] to the ground and vanishes. [Vahan] himself, together with his brave oath-keepers, like a lion, forcefully plowed through the middle of the entire mass and came out on the other side. He and the men with him killed many powerful warriors of the Iranian troops. Among them was Gdihon, the haughty prince of Siwnik', whom they mortally pierced with a lance through the armpit. With a frightful sound they rent the security of his armor in which the impious one had confidence, and the tip of the spear plunged into his liver. After several days of wickedly bitter gasping for air, [Gdihon] gave up the ghost, without confessing. He had at one time immodestly boasted: "I will not fight Vahan and the other Armenians with arrows, but rather with the notch of a single arrow I will scatter and disperse all of them across their valleys and plains."

His prideful words destroyed him. God had betrayed the prince of Siwnik', Gdihon, once and twice to the hands of men in the force of Vahan Mamikonean. God patiently and forgivingly pardoned [g152] him out of humanity, so that perhaps [Gdihon] would repent, [re]convert, do penance, and be saved. But when he did not come to his senses, and instead thoroughly scorned the truth, and did not respond to the divine inquiry, he received his shameful end, in this world and in the next. The Iranian troops went after the fugitive Armenians, and they killed many of these weakened cowards.

[302] After Armenia's general, Vahan Mamikonean with his colleagues had completed this deed of bravery (with the power of God), he then went unconcernedly as though he were a wing of the Iranian force. All the brigades of Shapuh's troops did not even dare to look at their faces. Because God had so inspired them with fear and dread of Armenia's general, Vahan Mamikonean, that the Iranian troops thought that if they merely looked at the Mamikonean and the men with him, they would be unable to escape without injury. Of the oath-keeping and strengthened men who were with Armenia's general, Vahan, and who attacked and were then martyred were:

K'ont ' Arhawenean,  
the venerable Ners Yovsepean,  
the venerable Atgen, *sepuh* of the Vanandac'ik',  
and the venerable Gherpargos, who was of Greek nationality.

84. Because of the extremely disagreeable odor, the Siwnik' troops threw the entrails of their prince on the ground. Then, after wrapping him in reeds, his relatives and servants took him to the land of Siwnik'. When the Siwnik' cavalry saw this, dismayed and distraught, they separated and splintered from each other and each returned to his place via different roads.

[303] When Shapuh, the military commander of the Iranian brigade, saw the collapse of the Siwnik' brigade and the awesome might of [his] adversary Vahan Mamikonean, he recalled the irresistible strength [of God] and was thoroughly frightened, wondering but not knowing what to do. For he said: "Vahan regarded as nothing the life of such a man as Gdihon and conquered him, the men with him, and the select brigade, as well as the men here with me. He attacked three and four thousand men with only thirty men, crushed the

hearts of all, destroyed such a huge multitude of troops, and caused such massive damage. With what assurance can we (who have become few) resist such brave folk. Thinking it over, I fear that in accordance with [Vahan's] brilliance, he will send to [g153] the nearby bordering places, to the Armenians of the district of Anjit or Cop' or Hashteank', and take auxiliaries from them as from his own relatives; and we survivors will be unable to save our own lives. Come now, let us hasten to the place of the *ostan* of Armenia and quickly send emissaries to inform the king of kings. Even though the Gods' assistance settled his affairs, it is time to return to the *ostan*. Thereafter, with the force of the brigade or by himself, he will try to take charge of the affairs of Armenia. But as I review the [304] events of the day before yesterday, I am unable to think or imagine anything. Although I am not so old, I have never even heard from the Aryan military commanders about warriors in centuries past, nor have I witnessed in my own time [an instance when] someone with ten men attacked 3,000 select cavalymen, accomplished so much, and then got away unharmed."

85. So Shapuh thought all of this over. The next day he went to the district of Basean, to a village called Aluar. While he was tormented by fearful thoughts of Armenia's general, Vahan Mamikonean, suddenly an emissary arrived from the Iranians bearing exceedingly bad news and letters containing much unpleasantness, written to Shapuh by the Iranian noble folk, and each of his relatives and friends who had escaped countless severe defeats from the Hephthalites. Shapuh took the letters, and, coming upon those passages which related the heavy and serious torments and the awesome destruction of the land of the Aryans, he sank into a state of dismayed terror. He remained speechless for a while like a fainting person, unable to ask the bringer of the correspondence anything or to come to his senses. After many hours he awoke as though from being dazed and drugged, and called the man, questioning him alone as to how and why such an end and destruction should have been visited upon [305] the land of the Aryans, or who could escape and bring the news of the destruction of such a countless multitude of troops, and why did the godlike lord Peroz die, and what sort of a death was it?

The emissary responded: "Your questions are proper and appropriate to anyone who wants to hear important and useful information from emissaries. However, it is very difficult for me to speak bad words and to narrate such wicked calamities and the escape of the fugitives. This is especially so when the cause of such injury and destruction was none other than the godlike lord of the Aryana, Peroz, himself. Although for [g154] a serving-man speaking ill about the gods brings death and destruction, nonetheless, it is necessary to say what was seen and heard and the matter cannot be ended without this. This is because presently the bad experience of the lord of the Aryans and of the entire land was due to the wrath of the gods, and the cause was none other than the lord of the Aryans himself. First, when Peroz was still in Hyrcania and massing troops from all sides, he wanted to go against the Hephthalites. He kept his thoughts to himself and did not ask anyone about the worthiness or unworthiness of the men. But everyone in the brigade knew that he wanted to fight the [306] Hephthalites. Recalling the terror and besiegement which [the Hephthalites] had put the lord of the Aryans and the Iranians to [previously], all of the men felt abandoned and broken-hearted and were unable to see a Hephthalite, or hear the name Hephthalite, to say nothing about actually going to fight against the Hephthalites. Every mouth was plainly saying: 'If we are condemned to death, and the king of kings wants to kill us, let him order us killed here with his own sword, instead of letting the Hephthalites destroy the Aryans with their swords. For from such a deed he personally and the land of the Aryans will receive eternally a bad name.' All the court nobility was constantly saying the same thing, especially the *sparapet* of the Aryans, Vahram, who boldly and publicly protested many times to Peroz. But [Peroz] would not listen to anyone nor did he sense or remember his disgraces from earlier enemies—disgraces which he personally and all the Aryans had experienced from the Hephthalites. So, with a huge multitude of Aryans and non-Aryans, he went against them. [The men] went as people condemned to death, not as warriors going to fight. The survivors also state that when they had approached, the Hephthalite [leader] sent to Peroz, saying: 'You have an oath with me—sworn, written, and sealed—that you will not fight with me. We stipulated a boundary over which we would not dare to cross to inimically fight each other. Now recall that oath, and the difficulties of the [307] besiegement from which I mercifully released you. I did not kill you but let you return in peace. Do not die!

Now if you do not heed my words, know that I will destroy you and the entire useless multitude in which you are placing your hopes. For I and the justice of oath-keeping are fighting together on one side, while you and the falseness of oath-breaking are together on the other side. So how are you going to be able to vanquish me?' When the Aryans heard the Hepthalite's words, they said to Peroz: 'He is right; we are fighting falsely.' Peroz, becoming greatly enraged at the Aryan nobility, haughtily replied to the Hepthalite, saying: 'With the multitude of this brigade which you will see, I will use half [of the soldiers] to fight with and defeat you, and with the other half I will transport the soil from the places where you are now to the sea and the trench to fill them up.' Because of the insensitivity of his heart [Peroz] did not realize that the corpses of his own [155] servants would fill the trench which he dug to destroy himself and the entire Aryan world. When the two sides met and clashed, [Peroz], all his sons, and land were lost. The few men who had escaped from the carnage reached Hyrcania and narrated to everyone all of these wicked developments, and this caused [308] all the *awags* and other people in Hyrcania to flee to Asorestan. They sent an emissary to Hazarawuxt in Iberia/Georgia and they dispatched me to come to you, so that you would quickly assemble together and devise ways of keeping yourselves and the Aryan world alive."

86. When Shapuh heard all these words from the emissary, he replied: " I and the brigade that you now see with me, even before this wicked news arrived, were seeking an excuse to get away from the work we have been engaged in. For the rebel Vahan has so stupefied and terrified, so endangered and fatigued us that his actions and deeds are not those of a man of this period such as we have seen or know about, but rather like those of the first *Kajs* which are related in romances and which we have heard. Forget about the deeds and courage which I and other noble folk have seen him and the men with him accomplish in earlier times. For ten days ago he attacked not only this multitude which is presently here and which you see, but also [we then had with us] the brigade of the prince of Siwnik', Gdihon, with the choice cavalymen of his district. Like an eagle swooping down upon a flock of partridges, Vahan with [309] only thirty men attacked [us] and there were those who were killed, and many others who were dispersed into crevices and holes in the rocks. In the same fashion this huge multitude of troops was scattered. After killing the giant-like Gdihon and killing many from the brigade, they themselves went off unharmed, fearing no one at all. Now, was it not Peroz' unseeing and contemptuous pride which removed such folk and such a great and useful land from serving the Aryans? Were I to be able to subdue and bring over to our side such people as Vahan (whom I previously knew to be brave, but whom I now know even better as a brave man) and the comrades with him, especially the three brothers from the Kamsarakan *tohm*, I would regard that [accomplishment] as a great consolation for the heavy destruction which has come over the Aryan world."

When Shapuh Mihranean and the emissary had spoken, they ordered the troops to go at all possible speed to the land of Iran [g156]. But Shapuh left the Kamsarakan women there at Boghberd, entrusting them to the fortress-keeper whom he repeatedly ordered to keep them very carefully and in extreme sanctity in accordance with the rules of the Christian faith. Armenia's general, Vahan Mamikonean, heard all these words and information and accepted the visitation from God and the facts of the news and the needs and cares of the land of Armenia. He knew each as proper and useful, and offered with [310] his mercy in accordance with the rationality of the seekers. Then he reached the city of Vagharshapat with the rational, loyal, oath-keeping Armenian *naxarars*. He conducted the usual oaths and masses in the holy cathedral church which the brave general of Armenia, Vahan Mamikonean, renovated with glorious splendor since the structure founded by his ancestors had become old. In the martyriums they first requited the needs of the poor, then they rejoiced delightedly. They then went on to the *ostan*, Duin, and spent some days there where they awaited and expected the command of Christ's leadership.

87. When Hazarawuxt, who was in the land of Iberia, heard about the slaying of Peroz and the inestimable destruction of the Iranian multitude, he was horrified and wracked with doubts, and immediately left for the country of Iran. When he reached the court, the remnants of the Aryan nobility gathered around him—the son of one, the brother of another—whoever had managed to survive at the time. They consulted among

themselves as to whom they could make worthy of the kingship. They thought this over for many days and unitedly fixed on Vagharsh, king Peroz' brother, a benevolent and mild man [Valash/Balash, 484-488]. When everyone had [311] assembled near Vagharsh, Hazarawuxt began to speak and reveal to him what all of them were thinking, reminding him of the self-indulgence and capriciousness of king Peroz, saying: "Whatever he wanted to do, he did through force alone—as he wished, with no regard for anyone and without consulting anyone, accomplishing everything through his tyrannical will. The result of his unquestioned thinking brought destruction and fragmentation not only to himself but to the Aryan world generally. Now all of us have enthusiastically chosen you as an agreeable, world-building man, so that through you the throne of the kingdom of the Aryan world would be made firm and so that the remaining portion of the Aryan world and the other lands subject to this kingdom be made to flourish. [We want you] to achieve reconciliation with the peoples who resist and rebell by using [your] mildness [g157] and affection; to recognize each of the Aryans and the non-Aryans according to merit; to know how to select the useful from the useless [people]; to consult with the wise; to love those who love their comrades, and to hate and destroy the envious and the slanderers; to observe everyone, recognizing the doers of good, and rewarding the meritorious with recompense suiting their labors." Having said all of this and other similar counsel to him, and after giving testimony, they seated him on the throne of the kingdom of Iran.

[312] 88. On the second day of Vagharsh's reign, Hazarawuxt and the nobility held counsel. In king Vagharsh's presence [Hazarawuxt] said: "As you yourself know, your violent, self-indulgent and obstinate brother, king of kings Peroz' contemptuous depravity caused many people to flee from the Aryan realm. In a major, not minor, way they have damaged the land of the Aryans. A primary example is the great land of the Armenians who today stand outside your service. The man who holds such a land aloof from you is a good man whose worth and essence went unrecognized by Peroz who drove him away from serving the Aryans. Everyone knows the injuries and blows occasioned by this man against the Aryan world. I think that you have heard and are informed about all of this. But Shapuh-Mihran whom you appointed [*marzpan*] knows about [Vahan's] bravery and wisdom even better through experience. If you wish to interrogate him and listen, he himself will tell you."

Then king Vagharsh asked Shapuh-Mihran about Armenian affairs: "What were you able to accomplish in the land of Armenia, what are Vahan's thoughts and strength, and how has he been able to resist the Aryans for so many years?" Mihran replied: "Brave of the Aryans, it seems that Vahan was triumphant in the battle which Hazarawuxt and we fought, even [313] though Vahan was there with all of his forces. Despite the fact that we were the victors, I know that they killed a countless multitude of our men. They dealt with your rule in such a way that half of the Armenian brigade engaged select warriors elsewhere. Hazarawuxt himself and other Iranian folk who were the seniors there know, nonetheless, what great damage [Vahan] inflicted with only a few men. After Hazarawuxt went to Iberia and left me there [in Armenia] as military commander, the way Vahan fatigued us with very few men (sometimes only hundreds, I am not exaggerating; and the noble folk of our brigade who were there and now are here testify) it is very difficult to say, and the words are unbelievable. For how could he fearlessly resist in battle with so few men [g158], and come against the encampment all day, inflicting very great harm? But I who was there recall the events of one day in particular, and again consider the affair beyond human capabilities, though who upon hearing can believe it? For [Vahan] with thirty men fearlessly attacked 3,000 [of us] and wrought such a deed that all who observed it recall it today and probably fear of it will not depart. Such new deeds resemble nothing so much as diligent *mshaks* with good sharp sickles and scythes chopping grass, putting it in many heaps close to each other, and then joyously returning to their [314] homes without a care. In just this way did they attack Mihran with so many men and completely split the entire brigade, killing many good folk including that awesome man, Gdihon, lord of Siwnik'. I had thought that only Gdihon with ten men of his brigade could encounter so many men and alone [be able to] do that. And [the Vahaneans] put to the sword such a man, and other distinguished and brave Iranian men. Nor did they then ride off on their horses and elude us. Rather, unconcernedly, they followed alongside for many hours. No one in our brigade dared to look at them. For it seemed to all of us



that they were gods, not men. Although my words may seem audacious before you, I dare to express these views because of the appropriateness of the time. For you yourself well know the greatness and benefit of the land of the Armenians. I feel that if Vahan and the other folk with him were today peacefully in your service, a great deal of good and important consolation would ease our sorrow. For when the Armenians with such folk, are ours, the Iberians and Aghbanians/Aghuans would never dare to deviate or think anything contrary."

[315] When king Vagharsh heard such statements in order from Mihran, Hazarawuxt, and all the other Iranian nobility, they all praised what Mihran had said as true indeed. They immediately dispatched to Armenia Nixor Vshnaspdat, a mild, intelligent and constructive person, with many select men. He was instructed by the king himself and even more so through the superintendence of Hazarawuxt and the other court nobility: "Go to Armenia and do whatever is necessary with all mildness and affection, according to the wishes of Vahan and his comrades, to bring these folk into Aryan service. But be careful to first assemble with you the cavalrymen of Atrpatakan who are near Armenia and the cavalry of Her and [g159] Zarawant district. For perhaps when you send to Vahan he will give you friendly pretexts but then trick and somehow harm you. The man is brave and shrewd. For to the present he and those with him have not accomplished such feats merely through bravery. Be well prepared. But it seems that Vahan would not think of such a thing, since the work which he and those with him made bold to do resulted from Peroz' lack of knowledge of human nature (in accordance with his proud and willful personality) [316] and the inability of Vahan and those men who allied with him, to bear the ridicule. Willing to face death, they were forced to do such things." When the lord of the Aryans, Vagharsh, and all the nobility had said these things to Nixor Vshnaspdat, they bid him farewell and dispatched him to Armenia.

89. Nixor came to the land of Armenia and did not dare to enter Armenian areas, but rather stopped in the district called Her at the village named Nuarsak. He sent as messengers to Vahan Mamikonean:

Shapuh, council scribe [*xorhrdean dpir*]  
and Mihr-Vshnasp Chuarshac'i,

through whom [Nixor] informed [Vahan] of his coming to Armenia, saying: "I have a *hrovartak* for you from king Vagharsh and a message to peaceably subdue you and all the noble folk who [formerly were] with the Aryans. Now come and listen, and choose what is good, what you find agreeable."

[317] When Vahan Mamikonean saw Nixor's messengers and heard from them all the words of this message, he assembled a brigade of all the loyal oath-keepers—*naxarars*, *azats* and all the cavalrymen. Vahan Mamikonean ordered those who had come from Nixor to say the words of king Vagharsh and of all the Aryan nobility in the presence of everyone. When Vahan Mamikonean had all the mass of the Armenian folk listen to Nixor's message, he informed the Iranian emissaries that he would reply to them on the next day.

The following day all the Armenian folk assembled by Vahan Mamikonean and first discussed among themselves the long-standing needs and problems of the matters. Nixor's emissaries came to the *atean* and the Mamikonid started replying to Nixor's words: "There are many important words regarding affairs of our rebellion—such a significant and potentially fatal act to which we have dedicated our lives—that it is impossible to deal with them in writing or by message; but only by speaking face-to-face with the one who is lord of the Aryans, and with you [a member] of the court nobility. But I will tell you three things which, if responded to in a manner desired by me and everyone here, if these three points are conceded to us in writing with the king's seal, then we [318] will do all that is fitting and appropriate, and will heed your words as our ancestors did. For the words which I [g160] presently speak with you are not my own, but those of all the people who are now before you, seniors and junior folk. Nor did we just today decide upon these words; rather, that was done on the day we dedicated ourselves to death. Everyone had previously resolved upon these three [demands]. If the Iranians consent to grant us these three [demands] we will serve them as natural

and loyal servants. But if they do not agree to it, and become [more] severe, we shall arise through the land, be ruined, and gladly die, but we shall not worship an Iranian.

"First and foremost among the three demands is this important and useful point: let us keep our patrimonial and natural laws/faith, let no Armenian become a mage; do not give station and honor because of [acceptance of] magianism; remove the fire-temples from the land of Armenia, and hereafter let us not see those loathesome and useless men who are enemies of the Church. Permit Christians and priests the order and worship of Christianity boldly and fearlessly. This is good, and it is our first demand.

[319] "The second demand is that you do not recognize a man on the basis of princship but rather that you correctly learn the good and bad, and select the useful, not the useless; know the noble and ignoble, respect and honor the brave and useful, and scorn and regard as nothing the bad and useless. Love those who labor and loathe those who are not meritorious; keep wise people around you and consult them; do not permit the foolish to approach, but even chase them from the assembly. When all of this has been implemented, all the affairs of the Aryan world will be successful and correct. But if you like it otherwise, as is the case now, then events and affairs will go in a contrary way, as indeed happened and as you saw.

"Our third demand is that we want the one who is the lord of the Aryans and king of the land to see with his own eyes, hear with his own ears, know and speak with his own mouth, and not with the eyes and ears of another. Let him not always recognize a man as good or bad on another's say-so, or talk about what is necessary with another's mouth. Otherwise, there will not be correct observations, or fair audience. For many words are false, many orders futile, and all wisdom is different. [320] When all these [evils] operate, all the meritorious and their servants are destroyed, and neither the land nor its inhabitants can remain stable and unmoved. But the king who sees with his own healthy eyes and hears with unbiased hearing and speaks fairly with his servants, will enliven his servants and they will not be satisfied with their labor but will increase their efforts, trying to increase the good, day by day. In this way the land is cultivated and the lord is always resplendent in luxury.

"Now if you can promise this, and can give us these promises in a written and sealed form, call us and we will willingly come and hear your words and accept whatever the king orders. But if you cannot give us these three demands, and know that it is impossible, then just as we gave our lives before, so we now are ready to die, but we cannot serve the lord of the Aryans. Should I come [to Iran] there are other words which I will personally speak with him; otherwise, should I not come, the words and matters will remain [as problems]."

90. When Vahan Mamikonean had said all these words to Shapuh, the council scribe, and to Mihr-Vshnasp Chuarshac'i, he sent them away. Along with Nixor's messengers, Vahan Mamikonean [321] sent the following oath-keepers:

Yashkur Arcruni,  
Sahak Kamsarakan, son of the venerable Arshawir,  
Vasawurt Kark'ayin,  
Arhawan Aghbawrkac'i, and  
Pachok, from the Mardpetakan brigade.

Vahan Mamikonean bid them all farewell and sent them in peace to Nixor.

They went to Nixor in the district of Her. When Nixor saw the Armenians who had come to him from Vahan Mamikonean, with a happy heart he rejoiced delightedly. He ordered a dinner and received them with much thanks and great affection, always recalling with each cup the brave Vahan Mamikonean. When the happy meal was finished, each went to his lodging. In the morning, all the Iranian *atean* assembled before Nixor, as well the God-forsaken [Zoroastrian Armenians] who were there. Then came the messengers who had been

sent by Nixor to Vahan Mamikonean: Shapuh and Mihr-Vshnasp, and the Armenian *naxarars* and other men with them who were sent by Vahan Mamikonean. Shapuh and Mihr-Vshnasp gave Vahan Mamikonean's message openly, before everyone at the *atean*. When Nixor heard all the words of Vahan Mamikonean, he rejoiced in front of all of them, saying: [322] "All the words and message sent by Vahan are indeed befitting of the gods. For just as the men who were forcibly taken by Peroz and killed by the Hepthalites were innocent (and the gods will demand their blood from Peroz) so too Vahan is guiltless in all the things he planned and did. For he operated because of the tyranny of Peroz' wickedness, and not on his own will. To this day I have not been consoled over the great destruction visited upon the land of the Aryans [g162]. But this news has joyfully consoled me today. May the gods let me see the day when Vahan has been reconciled to me and accepts Aryan service." [323]

Thus did Nixor speak before the entire *atean*, and when the oath-keeping Armenian *naxarars* and the other men who had come from Vahan Mamikonean heard this, they glorified God in Whose hands are the hearts of princes, and as He wills it, so He has them speak. Then Nixor immediately summoned the same messengers, Shapuh the council *dpir* and Mihr-Vshnasp Cuarshac'i, and wrote a letter to Vahan Mamikonean with the following import:

"I have heard all your words from the messengers whom I sent to you. I have repeated your words in this letter to let you know that indeed they have relayed all of it to me, and that I listened. Now come, come to me in surety and the lord of the Aryans and all the Aryan nobility swear to grant and fully implement all the demands which you have sent to me via these men. And then the lord of the Aryans will—as you wish—exalt you and those with you and send you back to Armenia."

[324] Nixor, having affectionately received and honored the *naxarars* who had come from Vahan Mamikonean, sent them to Vahan Mamikonean, with his own messengers. With much urging, he charged them to bring Vahan Mamikonean quickly and without delay. Then, bidding them farewell, he dispatched them affectionately. When those God-denying cheaters who had allied with the Iranians saw how the rebels who had come from Armenia were honored by Nixor and exalted by the Iranians, and that they themselves were scorned as useless, they filled up with shame and sank into the ground. When the oath-keeping *naxarars* of Armenia and the others with them saw that, they indicated their opprobrium to each other with their eyes. And one of the oath-keepers said to them: "If it is only the fact that Nixor spoke to us affectionately that has caused such a dark cloud and sadness to come upon you and to make you vanish into the ground, then when Christ favors, and you see Vahan Mamikonean and the other oath-keepers with him glorified, with glory given by Christ, will you not crumble and choke? And on the great day when [you encounter] the unquenchable Gehenna, what will you miserable wretches do then?"

[325] When the man had said this, they went to Vahan Mamikonean with Nixor's messengers. When Nixor's messengers had reached Vahan Mamikonean and delivered Nixor's letter, [Vahan] learned from what was written that Nixor had been informed by the messengers of all that he had sent him and that there was [g163] nothing in any of Vahan Mamikonean's statements that Nixor had ignored. He also learned from the messengers about how Nixor had so delightedly and affectionately received and exalted the *naxarars*. They also described the wicked humiliation of the oath-breakers' brigade, and how very much his going there was desired. And Nixor's messengers convinced him to go quickly.

91. Then Armenia's general, Vahan Mamikonean, departed with all the oath-keeping *naxarars* and many others, and an organized brigade. Having heard of Nixor's sworn thesis Vahan Mamikonean went to him willingly and with a joyful heart. Vahan Mamikonean came to the district called Artaz, to the village named Eghind, where he and all the brigades with him stopped. He sent to Nixor and made him aware of his arrival. Vahan Mamikonean said to Nixor: "Now if you [326] want me to come and see you, have some senior Aryans and people from noted *tohms* come here and stay with my folk, until I come to see you and the two of us

Speak together and hear from each other what we think is appropriate to do." When Nixor heard about the arrival and wish of Vahan Mamikonean, he immediately had [these men] sent to Nerseh Kamsarakan, lord of Shirak:

Baze, *shahap* of Atrpatakan,  
Veh-Vehnam, *hazarapet* of Armenia,  
Nershapuh, Mihran's brother,  
and five other senior Iranians.

Vahan Mamikonean saw the noble folk sent to him by Nixor, and received them happily. Rejoicing together that day, the next day he left the eight [Iranians] with his loyal men, ordering them to honor them worthily and to be careful. Then, with an organized brigade, he went to Nixor. Approaching the village where Nixor was, he ordered the troops who were with him to arm as if in preparation for battle. And on hearing Vahan Mamikonean's command, they fully prepared and presented themselves. Vahan Mamikonean gave the order to sound the war trumpets, and at the furious sound of the blaring trumpets, the earth shook. Amazed, the men of Nixor's force thought [327] that Vahan Mamikonean had come deceitfully to hurt them, and not in love for peaceful submission.

Nixor sent senior men in advance of him and had them say to Vahan Mamikonean: "What you are doing is not in accord with Aryan custom and is a new thing you have fashioned. From now on it is very necessary for you to hold and accept Aryan custom. For only the *sparapet* of the Aryan army dares to enter the Aryans' [camp] with the trumpets sounding [g164]; and no one would dare to be so audacious to the Iranians." Vahan Mamikonean responded to Nixor, saying: "First let the lord of the Aryans make me a servant, and then, without learning it from you, it seems I [will] know the custom and dignity of the land of the Aryans. Do not think that I am so forgetful, since it has not been so many years since I left you."

Thus did Vahan Mamikonean say these things to Nixor by means of the messenger, then he himself came to see him at the time of the *atean*. The Mamikonid came to Nixor at sunrise. When Nixor saw Vahan Mamikonean and the other *naxarar* oath-keepers with him, he embraced him for many hours and saluted him. He also conveyed the greetings of [328] Vagharsh, lord of the Aryans, and of all the nobility. [Nixor] greeted by name each of the *naxarars* who had come with Vahan Mamikonean, welcoming them with great affection, and likewise all the men in the brigade, senior and junior. When Vahan Mamikonean heard the greetings of the lord of the Aryans and all the court nobility, he prostrated himself giving thanks and received them with great rejoicing. Then Nixor commanded that all the men of Vahan Mamikonean's force be let inside and also ordered the senior Iranian folk to come inside to the *atean*. Everything that Nixor said was done, and when the *atean* was completely full of the men with Vahan Mamikonean and the other Iranian folk, Nixor began speaking with Vahan Mamikonean, as follows:

"Although you did not remain near me as a usual neighbor, nonetheless I have seen you many times at court and heard about you from men of the world, Armenians and Iranians (who are not unseeing or useless men, but good, perspicacious, and wise folk), and now all of us know about you first-hand from experience. Warfare is waged as much by bravery [329] as by prudence and wisdom—maybe more so. You have made the entire Aryan world see and acknowledge both capacities in your person. For you displayed bravery with but few men, always fighting against many men with a few, causing such great injuries and wearing [us] out. And you showed wisdom, knowing when to fight, when to give ground, keeping [your] brigade unharmed, but ready at the next moment to fight without fear. For if these two traits were not present and fully developed in you, how would you have been able to resist such a countless multitude of fighting folk with so few men, and at times to overwhelmingly win, at times to terrify and fatigue? Consequently, recalling your great feat and intellect, I regard all of your replies as extremely brave [when you say that] you will do everything you hear us say. For when we ask about your rebellion, how you dared to plot it, let alone effect it, you reply that

you were forced as a last [g165] resort because of Peroz' lack of recognition, and that you were forced to the point of death. He demanded service and labor as a god and he thought not to give recompense for that service, as a stupid man would conduct himself. For a brave man it is better that he live but one day recognized for personal bravery, and then die, rather than live many hours with blows. None of the Aryans can blame you, not the one who presently [330] is lord of the Aryans, nor the court nobility which now exists, and you know that. For if the king of kings, Peroz, was unable to care for the safety of himself and his own sons, how could he concern himself about any good servant he had? What you did, no one could have dreamed of or attempted. But all of [his] servants, seeing the limitlessness of his insolence, thought of doing the same every day, but were unwilling to risk death."

"But you and the men united with you, regarding their lives as nothing, bravely applied themselves to the deed. As for those of your number who died, the gods will demand that blood from the impiety of Peroz; and as for those of you who are still alive, you are guiltless and blameless. For the one who is now lord of the Aryans, and all the nobility, always talk about this, and inconsolably lament and mourn, recalling the intractable and impious ways of the man who had no parallel among men, but rather resembled a wild beast. He was the one who lost himself and the might and strength of the Aryan world and gave the great and free kingdom into service to the Hephthalites. As long as the Aryan world endures there will be no more bitter service from which we cannot free ourselves. But should you willingly submit, and perform the natural service of your ancestors, overlooking and forgiving the bad things between [331] us, with my intercession I will arrange that you return to Armenia and the king will have [this agreement] sealed and sent to you. Then when you come safely to the lord of the Aryans, he will affectionately and willingly grant and implement everything that you wish which is good and worthy for yourself and for whomever you choose."

92. Vahan Mamikonean listened to all that Nixor said at the *atean* to him and to the oath-keeping Armenian *naxarars* with him, and replied: "It is easy for forward-looking and thoughtful people to recognize when the peace of God is upon the land. When He gives us a benevolent, experienced and constructive prince, the feeble should understand the benevolence of God's visitation, since [that prince] will spread goodness over the land and renew it [g166] as is happening now, it seems to me and everyone else. For, although I have not yet seen the lord of the Aryans, I would like to (if God grants me your intercession), as would all Christians. However, we should also like to see you, the new peace-maker, sent as the cause of such goodness for a land such as Armenia and for us, people of that land, for your concern for everyone, land and people. [332] We see you as wanting and loving what is good, and regard you as a good thing for ourselves and our land. As for what you said about the king of kings, Peroz' behavior and self-indulgence—having servants with uncritical minds, his inability to choose bad from good, brave from cowardly, wise from stupid, deserving from undeserving, it was sufficient and full. I thank God that you did not weary me to respond to your inquiries. But I am still saddened by something about Peroz; how he and all the Aryans were constantly deceived by despicable men loathed by all pure people, men who were fugitives from the land because of their foul deeds, men who caused unrest in the mountains, brigand chiefs, those guilty of shedding blood, parasites, plagiarizers, cheats, blabbers, dissidents, the ignoble who realize that they are nothing, unable to accomplish anything, who lose courage at doing something, abandoned at the hunt, they come and fall upon the ashes. You give them the proposition and joyfully dispatch them, favoring them with position, honor, others' houses, lives and greatness. Having eluded you a little, you are silent about the other very great hostile acts by which each one insults the fire in his house. [333] They insult the fire with their excess waste. It is known by everyone and apparent that all craftsmen who know their craft and benefit from it, want to teach the same to their sons so that they can live. But such deceitful men know that they can live and grow great not through wisdom and bravery but through false traffic with ashes; and they hurry to teach the same to their sons. Therefore merit, intelligence, bravery, nobility and justice have departed from and ruined the land of Armenia, while people with affected dignity strut about. You Aryans, seeing all of that, not recognizing that it was your instruction that created them, do not blame them for learning and knowing nothing. Rather, you deride [the Armenians] even at *atean*, saying that the Armenians are the worst and least of the fighters placing

them after the Syrians, the forsaken, [g167] the crippled and the paralysed, and others like them who are attached to your parasitical detachment and are not ashamed. For them such repute seems [a cause for] rejoicing. However, a real man would be shamed to the heart by such words spoken by the lord of the Aryans, and would expire upon hearing them not just once or twice, but, if he heard them ten times, he ought to die ten times.

[334] "Bearing this in mind, such words of ridicule that the lord of the Aryans placed on our land and insisted upon, we dared to plan and think about [rebellion]. And, although we thought about leaving the land and disappearing, recognizing the might and multitude of the Aryans (for we are not so stupid and crazed to think that we could resist and not be destroyed by fighting such a countless multitude of troops with a paltry number of men, we knew this very well), nonetheless we then reasoned that were we, terrified, to imperceptibly steal away, we would certainly inherit the bad name which has been given to us as such backward and despicable men who truly were lost and vanished without a trace. And you would say that whether they were there or not, the matter ended the same way. But we chose first to inform ourselves and then either to die and be lost. Had we been able to remain united, had we not split and argued, we would have shown those coming against us whether indeed we resembled Aryans or Syrians. I will give you a sign—test it. Command those people who through magianism became lords in Peroz' reign, who now have station and honor, are princes of each district, lords of horse, troops, and brigades, to assemble together with all their cavalry. And we [will fight] with the few men whom you know we have, who lack house, servant, brigade and *tanuterut'iwn*. You Aryans should [335] then withhold your assistance for a moment, and leave [ownership] of the land of Armenia to us and them. [You should] give the land to whomever can expell the other and make [that party] your servants.

"Although I do not want to burden your quick mind with verbosity, nonetheless it is impossible not to mention or be silent about benefit to many people. For my words regard the salvation or loss of a great land, and should be stated in full. We who placed our lives in peril of death, and abandoned the lord of the Aryans, wrote to you three times by means of messengers, and you, similarly repeated [the demands] in writing, from the king. We need only those demands; grant them in writing and with the king's seal. As for other gifts, luxuries, and merits, see that you reward each one according to his worth. You are our [g168] natural lords; we are your natural servants. Accept us with affection, and we shall happily serve you. Grant us forgiveness for that transgression which your tyranny forced us to perpetrate."

93. When Nixor heard such words from Vahan Mamikonean, with a greatly rejoicing heart he said before the *atean*: "The courageous and just words of Vahan and the good news about [his willingness to] submit has removed all the great [336] sorrow of the destruction of the land of the Aryans and the dark cloud which has come upon my heart, [Vahan's words] have consoled and gladdened me." He ordered the *atean* dismissed, saying: "Whatever else must be said between myself and Vahan will be aired day by day, and in a few days we will rejoice together." And that day Nixor ordered that Vahan should come and rejoice with him with all the oath-keeping *naxarars* and the entire brigade he had. But all the oath-breaking Armenians and the apostates were removed from the festivities, full of shame. After rejoicing that day with a great dinner, and bidding farewell to Nixor, they went to lodge in their own places.

The next day Nixor ordered the entire multitude of men to gather in assembly, and he had Vahan Mamikonean brought to his room while he himself was alone. They then spoke together for many hours about the important needs of the land's affairs, according to the princes' care, and then the two went together to the house of *atean*. Nixor ordered all who had come with Vahan Mamikonean, *naxarars* and *rhamiks*, to enter the *atean* and approach him, and [similarly he ordered that] the Iranian seniors come to him in the *atean*. The ushers [337] were ordered not to permit those [oath-breakers] who had made themselves loyal to the Iranians to approach the entrance, saying: "You are no good for anything having to do with wise words, and do not

even know how to listen. So why prevent the site of the *atean* from achieving dignity? Now let a man who knows how to listen and profit from the words of seniors and the speech of the wise sit there."

One could then see at the *atean* righteous God's reward as he gave splendor and courage to his beloved oath-keepers, but filled with shame and ignominy the duplicitous class of apostates. And truly the word of Scripture was revealed, that "God is light." For as the light, and through God, the faces of the pious servants were illuminated. They chose [God] and were illuminated. But an ashen color descended upon the faces of the ash-worshippers, stripping away the [normal] faces of the impious, and accurately revealing [underneath] faces of deceitful parasites, full of shameful ignominy. Truly, as the church rhetorician said, their color had languished and waned [g169] and they resembled statues. And before all, indeed they were revealed as the slaves who disgraced the crucifixion of Christ. With regard to them the words of the psalmist were fulfilled: "The wicked are not so [Psalms I, 4]." These were [338] the wretches and pitiful men whom the *atrushan* did not favor, and who were expelled by the blessed people of the Church. They sat together stunned, broken, and as though awakened from a nightmare. They were awestruck and frightened at this act of God's power which so quickly and unexpectedly made them seem malignant and laughable in front of their dear ones. Now they wanted, if it were possible, to purchase even at great price, the name of rebellion, but it was not given to them. For whenever one of these nonentities wanted to enter the *atean* [and join] the multitude, he would say to the ushers: "I am from the brigade of the rebels," and immediately they let him in. But none of them were permitted to approach the doors of the *atean* nor to hear what the princes had to say. It was then at the *atean* that the clear eye of the lovers of truth saw brilliantly the flight of assistance of saint Gregory with all of his ascetic comrades over the army of the long-patient oath-keepers, who caused all the faces of the Iranians and others to look with awe and rejoicing at Vahan Mamikonean to whom Christ gave the wisdom of graceful preparation, aid in finding prudence and a strong voice. The words of Christ the Savior written in the Gospel [339] were realized: "It is not you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father Which speaks through you" [Matthew 10, 20].

When Vahan Mamikonean had repeated in the *atean* the same things [he had said before], he started to speak to Nixor again: "You are able to recognize and know how to requite the worth of each individual's request and benefit, of the *naxarars*, *azats* and others, the *ostanik* people and the cavalry folk who presently are here before you. But I and the oath-keeping *naxarars* with me [want] what we demanded from you through messengers and in writing, what yesterday and today I discussed with you face to face, and you promised to give us by order of the lord of the Aryans and all the court nobility in writing and sealed. Without this it is impossible for us to live or serve you—unless there is confirmation of the Christian faith, the removal of magianism and the *atrushans* from the land of Armenia, and [confirmation of] the brilliance and worship of the Church, as we wish. This is important and essential to us; confirm it with the king's seal. It is unnecessary to elaborate on whatever else was written in the letter, since you know all of it. As for the station, honor and luxury, look to each man's merits, give generously and do not deprive [anyone]." [g170]

[340] 94. When Vahan Mamikonean had said all this, Nixor heard it all and enthusiastically consented. Nixor requested from Vahan the native Armenian cavalry, saying: "Quickly organize and dispatch it to court, for Peroz' son, Zareh, resisting what the Aryans have done, has yet organized a brigade, to the ruination of himself and those who agree with him. Now quickly send the Armenian cavalry so that before you go to court you will have shown a great deed of service before the king and all the Aryans. For the king has also ordered me to quickly go to court. For the gods will resolve this matter successfully and benevolently. It is appropriate and fitting that I should go there even more quickly." Nixor and Vahan Mamikonean rejoiced with each other for a few days, while he quickly arranged what was necessary. Bidding each other farewell, they went in peace, Nixor to court and the king, and Armenia's general, Vahan Mamikonean, to Duin.

When [Vahan] reached the bank of the river which was turgidly swollen because of the season, they found the bridge of Artashat ruined. This had happened partly from the recourse of the inhabitants of the place, and

partly from the fury of the waters. The troops were in doubt and sought for a place to cross, but [341] they did not find one. Some who tried [crossing at] many places were submerged in the water and were barely able to find a way out and save themselves. But Armenia's brave general, Vahan Mamikonean, approached a place on the bank of the river, made the sign of the blessed life-giving Cross over himself, descended into the river, and peacefully crossed through the water, as though going through very shallow water. This was the fording place for the entire brigade which crossed over without a care. This was a great and clear sign both for the horsemen and the entire cavalry which were able to cross easily, as they wanted. For Armenia's brave general, Vahan Mamikonean, rooted in the true faith, it was a sign resembling the passage of the Israelite people through the Jordan. Upon entering the *ostan* Duin, they worthily offered a mass of thanksgiving to God. First they gave provisions to the poor with compassion, in accordance with custom; then they themselves rejoiced according to God's pleasure, with delighted hearts.

Vahan Mamikonean organized the Armenian cavalry, entrusting it to Vren Vanandac'i, and sent it to court. [342] Among those sent was one of [Vahan's] own nephews (brother's son), Grigor, son of the hero Vasak. When they arrived at court, they went off, ready to make war. When the two brigades clashed, Zareh's brigade was defeated and fled, and many of the wounded died. There the *sepuh* of the [g171] Mamikoneans, Grigor, became valliant like his father, and displayed great bravery, which was clear to the general and to all the troops. He received a good reputation and [the news of it] reached the ears of king Vagharsh. The Vanandac'i *sepuh*, Vren, also did well, displaying outstanding work. Then Zareh fled to the mountainous areas where he secured himself. But they arrested him and brought him to the royal assembly where they mercilessly slaughtered him, like an animal.

95. After a few days, Vahan Mamikonean urgently assembled the Armenian cavalry and then he and all the oath-keeping *naxarars* with him went to king Vagharsh. Going to the lodging places *en route* in a proper number of days, he reached the court. When the king and all the Aryan nobility learned about Vahan's arrival at court, they quickly and hurriedly set a time for him to see the king and all the Aryan nobility. Considering Vahan Mamikonean's fatigue from traveling, king Vagharsh rejoiced merely in affectionately inquiring about his well-being, but asked no more of him on that day. [343] The next day all the court nobility assembled there, as well as the entire multitude of Aryans, and the great palace was filled with a huge number of folk.

King Vagharsh began speaking with Vahan Mamikonean, as follows: "We have fully heard about all the conversations through Nixor, what you said via messengers, what [you wrote] in letters, and what the two of you said to each other when meeting face to face. In no way did you err in what had been said. For had you alone been lost to the Aryans through my brother Peroz' self-indulgent nature, uncooperativeness, unwillingness to listen to anyone and arrogance, the damage would have been light. When one servant is lost, it is usually possible to replace him. But because of his pride, such a countless multitude of good folk were lost, that there is no way of replacing them today. Furthermore, he finally destroyed himself, his sons and women. Now had you been the cause of your own ruination and that of such a multitude lost because of you, you would today be worthy of interrogation, and of a wickedly tormented death. However, since there is another cause for all that you did and for the loss you caused, to punish you [344] for another's tyranny and damage would be very heavy, and our laws do not command it. For the same act which you were able to carry out because of Peroz' contemptuous and crooked behavior, many of the Aryans thought of doing, but were incapable of it. For unlike you, they were unable to fearlessly commit their lives to death, regarding life as sweet. But you, never regarding this world as anything, bravely died (those who died), while those who lived have done so even more bravely [g172]. How unfortunate that the other folk whom Peroz futilely led to destruction were unable to behave as bravely as you did. Perhaps they would be alive today and, like you, with us."

Vahan Mamikonean responded to king Vagharsh in front of the entire multitude, saying: "It is improper to speak at length before God and before you kings. For you and all the court nobility have been shown through



Nixor's written and sealed [letters] all of our words, the problem and boldness of the act, and [our willingness] to give our lives. To repeat the same thing many times, prolongs matters and is tedious. As you described it, your brother Peroz' will and unyielding tyranny were excessive and unbecoming a king. Others who experienced his tyranny at least were granted life or tormented by something else, but you attacked us spiritually. Neither our ancestors nor we were able to be [345] stopped by the needs or danger [of resistance]. We constantly complained and are complaining that your faith/laws seem false to us and like the babblings of stupid people. Do not force us to be enemies over something which we cannot willingly and thoughtfully revere and love, for it seems laughable and we do not believe [in Zoroastrianism]. But, not heeding our protests, imperiously and forcibly you wanted to destroy us, and were yourselves destroyed. For our faith demands purity and does not accept or allow all the impurities by which the souls of people are ruined. [Our faith] commands [us] to serve [our] masters and obey, as though [they were] God. But come now and show [me] one man who, through the king of kings Peroz, accepted and revered your faith and also displayed merit and accomplishment because of his usefulness or [abilities] in fighting. Many of your Aryan military commanders have been in diverse places, and one of them should be able to say what prominent accomplishment they have done which was seen by your military commanders, and as a result of such meritorious service were rewarded by you. People from the same district as they and other people from the land of Armenia clearly know about their impure acts and how much they deserve to be put to death. They know what kind of people they are, full of all impurities, false, despicable, doers of filthy things, people who do things by stealth, thieves, [346] people who create agitation in the mountains, grave robbers, cheats. Even the lesser *shinakan* people of the land of Armenia are loath to eat bread with them or even to go near them so that in accordance with the command of our faith they not be polluted. Coming from you duplicitously they hold your faith, but they pollute the fire as they wish and regard you as stupid.

"Today I speak before you boldly and forthrightly about this. Remove that traffic in duplicity from the land of Armenia [g173]. [It is something] which we do not regard as just, and we do not revere anyone as God. But the last have been made first, the bad, good; the despicable, useful; the son, disobedient toward his father; the servant does his lord ill, and whenever someone wants to hold someone back or destroy him, taking your false faith in hand, he does all the evils he wishes, and settles the matter with it. But now demand that we honor you as servants honor lords; recompense each man according to his work, merit, subordination, benefit, honesty, worthily with godlike undepriving intentions. These words and this issue come from us all. If you grant confirmation of our demand and do not want to remove us from your service, then confirm it for us in writing and with the seal as are the laws of kings [confirmed]. And demand submission from us [347] as from serving folk. With your intelligent and all-seeing eye examine a man and his work, and reward appropriately."

When Vahan Mamikonean had spoken all these words before king Vagharsh and all the court nobility, all of them loudly praised and esteemed him, all marvelled at the Mamikonid's wisdom and the grace of the words issuing from his mouth. It was clear not only to believers, but to non-believers that the outpouring of words from the Mamikonid was granted by God. He spoke to the ears of everyone with agreeable sweetness.

King Vagharsh replied to Vahan Mamikonean and to all his oath-keeping *naxarars*: "Everything which you have thought about and revealed which was described before us by your Vahan I shall give you written and sealed—from today to eternity—all you demand. Today I forgive you the act of rebellion which you did because of Peroz' tyranny and not of your will. Let none of the kings who hold this throne, or an Aryan hereafter recall it, either alone in his conversations or before an Armenian. Now fully discharge the submission which it is fitting for a servant to do for the lords." After this was said, they dismissed the *atean*.

[348] 96. The next day the court nobility advised king Vagharsh (whom they knew would be agreeable to hearing and doing it) to give Vahan Mamikonean the *terut'iwn* of the Mamikoneans and the *sparapetut'iwn* of Armenia. The king willingly and gladly agreed, and they informed Vahan Mamikonean of the the united wish of the king and the court nobility. Vahan Mamikonean responded, saying: "I do [g174] not have the authority

to resist your wishes and command; your wishes and what you have done for me is very great and [even] excessive. I wish that you would allow me to display some small act of service which you might look upon and then do as is proper and what pleases you. In this fashion I hope that you will forgive me."

The king and all the Aryan nobility silenced Vahan Mamikonean's words, and sat him on the throne of the Mamikonean lordship, giving him (in the example of his ancestors) the *sparapetut'iwn* of the land of Armenia. They also favored each of the other oath-keeping *naxarars* of Armenia who were united with the *sparapet* of Armenia, Vahan, with what was necessary and proper for the dignity of each. Then after king Vagharsh and all the nobility had received all of them full of affection and willing honor, they were ready to return in peace to the land of Armenia.

[349] When Vahan, lord of the Mamikoneans and *sparapet* of Armenia, came to say farewell to Vagharsh, king of the Aryans, and to all the court nobility, king Vagharsh asked him: "Vahan, *sparapet* of Armenia, are you satisfied with us, did we receive you well? If there is anything else you need, say so." Armenia's general, Vahan, lord of the Mamikoneans replied to king Vagharsh: "Whatever benevolence you have done for me could only have been done by God Who is the creator of all and desires the good and beneficial for all people. Only He could have done what you did to us, your unworthy servants; it would have been impossible for a mortal to have done it. For you pardoned crimes, exalted with throne and honor, became a raiser of the dead, and having found a confused and ruined land, you righted it. But since you asked and encouraged me to speak the truth, just as, godlike, you became the envivifier of my death, and raised me up from it, I would like my entire person to be raised, not just half. For I see that half [of me] is still dead." King Vagharsh inquired: "Now tell us in plain words what you need so that we will know." The *sparapet* of Armenia, lord Vahan Mamikonean said: "Were it possible for you to grant [me] the Kamsarakan *terut'iwn*, [I would be] fully favored by you, and would see the death in all of my limbs turn to life."

King Vagharsh replied to the *sparapet* of Armenia, lord of the Mamikoneans, Vahan: "So that you will not be very [350] saddened now, and also, since you first and foremost sought that present from us, let the Kamsarakan *terut'iwn* be given [g175] to you. But regarding the Arcrunid *terut'iwn*, wait a while until people from that *tohm* know [about this matter], perform some service for us worthily and some merit to the benefit of the Aryan world, and then we will look to what is fitting."

97. King Vagharsh said farewell to the *sparapet* of Armenia lord of the Mamikoneans, Vahan, and to all the Armenian *naxarars*, and released them in peace. When Vahan, the general of Armenia and lord of the Mamikoneans, and all the oath-keeping *naxarars* of Armenia with him arrived in the land of Armenia, that blessed man of God, the *kat'oghikos* of Armenia, Yohan, came before them with the revered symbol of the Cross and the blessed remains of the ascetic champion Gregory, which had indeed accompanied all of them to Court. When the blessed *kat'oghikos* Yohan encountered Vahan, the general of Armenia and lord of the Mamikoneans, and the other Armenian *naxarars* with him and the entire multitude of the troops, he greeted them with the kiss of blessing and said with a joyous heart: "I rejoice in the Lord Who wiped away the sweat from the diligent sons of His Church for which they toiled, for the name of Christ. He ended fatigue, cleaned the dirt of weapons, washed the souls of the faithful with the water of oath-keeping and clothed all in the dress of salvation [351] and the robe of joy. He gave a crown as if to the bridegroom and adorned you with ornaments as a bride in His Kingdom. With the intercession of His saints may He grant that you be adorned with that ornament given to the apostles of the just and the prophets on the day of Christ. The brilliance of that ornament is such that no eye has seen before, no ear has heard of, and no heart has experienced. Such is the ornament which God has readied for His loved ones."

After the blessed *kat'oghikos* had said all of this and blessed everyone, they came first to the city of Vagharshapat which is now called Nor Kaghak' [New City]. In accordance with their custom Vahan, the *sparapet* of Armenia, and the oath-keeping Armenian *naxarars* with him, remained there for some days and

fulfilled vows and made presents to the blessed Cathedral church, then to each site of the martyred virgins. First they concerned themselves with the needs of sustaining the poor, and fulfilled them amply. All the *naxarars* of Armenia united, and the other multitude came every day with great rejoicing, with psalms, and homilies of the spiritual *vardapets* of the holy Church. They rejoiced happily with the general of Armenia Vahan, lord of the Mamikoneans, and with each other. After remaining there for some days, Armenia's general, Vahan lord of the Mamikoneans, with the entire Armenian multitude left and came to the natural *ostan* of Armenia, Duin, blessing and glorifying the power of the holy Trinity [g176].

[352] 98. Then a *marzpan* named Andekan came to the country of Armenia, an intelligent, prudent and perspicacious man who could distinguish the wise from the stupid, and the good from the bad. Daily he observed the intelligence of Vahan, Armenia's general and lord of the Mamikoneans, his judicious nature, concern for the welfare of the land, brave-heartedness, appropriateness in everything, total progress; and he also saw that whatever work [Vahan] involved himself in, even though it be very difficult, the Lord aided his hand and everything was concluded easily and effortlessly. Seeing daily such God-given wisdom which dwelled in Armenia's general Vahan, lord of the Mamikoneans, and thinking all of it over, Andekan was secretly astonished and rejoiced at his benevolent thoughts.

Andekan also liked [Vahan] and frequently acquainted all the court nobility and his friends with the man's wisdom. He also had king Vagharsh fully informed about everything. Andekan himself travelled from the land of Armenia to court where, before all the court nobility, he informed king Vagharsh about all the successes of Armenia's general Vahan, lord of the Mamikoneans, greatly marvelling: "All the good wisdom [of his], about which I have written to you many times and now describe in person, is growing greater by the day and in no way is his advance ever lessened. Consequently, I make bold to openly [353] state before you that it would be most inappropriate for you to appoint anyone else as *marzpan*. For should another *marzpan* go to the land of Armenia, first and foremost he would lack the counsel which that man possesses. No one aside from you (who are godlike and above human nature) possesses such grace and adept prudence. But as for mortals, I boldly say that there are few to compare with him.

"Furthermore, assuming that a foreign *marzpan* went to the land of Armenia, [he would find that] it is a large land; in two or three years he would hardly be able to recognize the principal affairs of the land, the simple and difficult, the good, bad, useful or despicable people of the land. He would act through ignorance in a confused manner which would be a burden for the people. But [Vahan], since he is a native of the land, recognizes everyone at a glance—keeping the good with the good and the despicable in last place. There is yet more to the matter. If an Iranian *marzpan* goes to the land, he will travel with wife, sons, court, dear ones, servants and maid-servants. Should all of them consume a stipend from the lord of the Aryans, it will not be a small expense [g177]; should they consume [stipends provided] from the land [of Armenia], much danger will be visited upon the people of that land. [354] But if he [Vahan] were to be [the *marzpan*], he would consume his own House provisions, and all of that [would-be expense] would go to the royal treasury and benefit royal affairs. After watching Vahan's goodness and successfulness and thinking it over in my mind for many hours, I think that [the appointment of Vahan as *marzpan*] would be good both for the affairs of the land and for the court. I have made bold to say this. To decide what is proper and to do it, you, brothers, know."

When king Vagharsh and all the court nobility heard all of Andekan's words, they were pleased with them. All who heard were surprised and with great praise they considered Andekan to be a man who loves his master and builds up the land.

99. Then with the unity of all the court nobility and the Aryans, king Vagharsh immediately ordered that a *hrovartak* be sent to Armenia to establish Vahan, lord of the Mamikoneans and general of Armenia, as *marzpan* of the land of Armenia. Bringing the *hrovartak* of the *marzpanate* they presented it to Vahan,

Armenia's general and lord of the Mamikoneans. And through the right-hand of Almighty God they established and confirmed him as *marzpan* over the land of Armenia.

[355] Now Vahan, lord of the Mamikoneans, general of Armenia, and *marzpan*, received the *hrovartak* of the *marzpanate* from the hands of the emissary, although he recognized the envy of [certain] Armenian people and was burdened by the matter. Nevertheless he did not dare to resist the king's order and be disobedient. Taking the *hrovartak*, he immediately requested a horse to go to the House of God. When the people who were in the city heard this, they also rushed there, one and all—everyone: *naxarars* and *azats*, *ostaniks* and *rhamiks*, men and women, old and young, and even brides of the nuptial chamber (forgetting for the moment in the jubilation, the modesty of bridehood) hurried to the church. And the House of God was insufficient to hold all of them. The porticos outside the church, the streets, and all places in the surrounding squares were filled. That was a day of immeasurable joy and inexhaustible happiness for pious lovers of good and the rationally right-minded people, but [a day] of tearful mourning and unconsolable sorrow for the stupid and the rogues.

When the blessed *kat'oghikos* of Armenia, Yovhan, saw the unexpected glad tiding, the venerable one thanked God and with a heart breaking with joy he had the psalm read: [356] "Bless God in the great congregation, the Lord, Oh you who are of Israel's fountain" [Psalms 67, 27]. He ordered readings from the passage describing Israel's deliverance from the servitude of pharaoh, and from Kings, the passage where David crowns his son Solomon as king. Then [Yovhan] came to the part where he himself was to read. Giving the greeting of peace, he said:

[Translator's note: According to the editors (p. 179 n. 1), section 100 of the *History* is a combination of a homily by John Mandakuni and citations from different books of the Bible (see below). It clearly is a later addition, containing, as they note, certain inappropriate themes and words juxtaposed with the more sublime. Consequently, we have avoided translating this section. Among the Biblical books and passages cited are: Luke 10, 1, 9; Psalms 67,27; Genesis 2, 10; Matthew 22, 21; Mark 12,17; III Kings I, 48; Hosea 8, 4; Isaiah 30, 1; III Kings II, 17; Isaiah 9,13; Jeremiah 9,1; Psalms 46, 2; Matthew 11, 29; Matthew 9,13; Romans 15,1; Song of Songs 4,10; Exodus 32,6; I. Corinthians 10,7; Galatians 3, 25-26; II Corinthians 3,3; Matthew 11, 29; Luke 17,10; and Matthew 25, 34.]